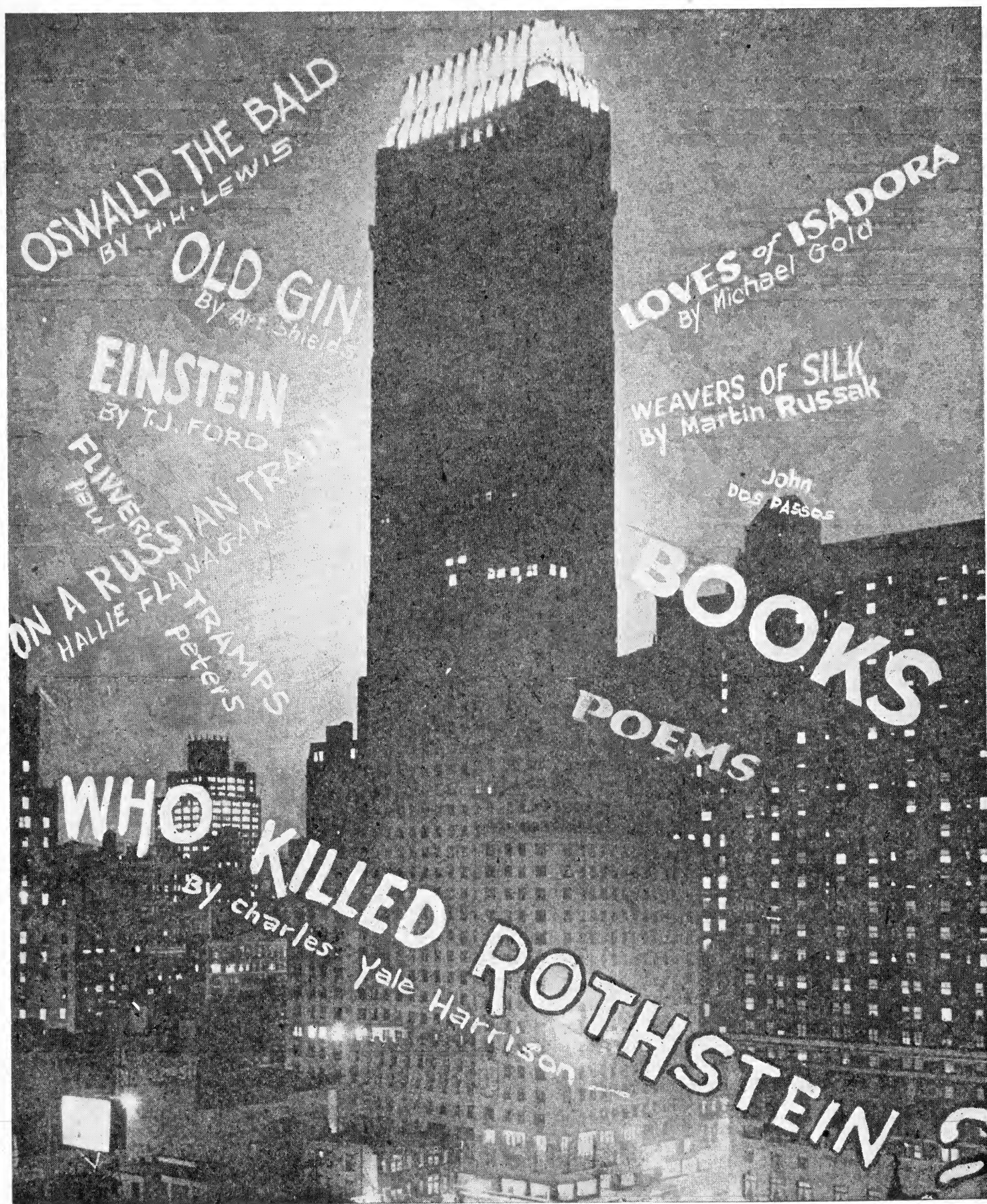


NEW

# MASSSES

MARCH, 1929

15 Cents



# *"In Questa Tomba Oscura?"*

(Within The Tomb--Forgotten?)



MOONEY AT TIME OF TRIAL

## CLARENCE DARROW GIVES \$500

Chicago, July 4, 1928.

Tom Mooney,  
San Quentin, Calif.

My Dear Mooney:

I hope you will excuse me for keeping your papers so long. I am surprised to see how complete the case is. It is hard to imagine the Governor keeping you in prison after reading these documents.

They ought to result in a release. However, there is something that is keeping you beyond what applies to the ordinary prisoner. When the Judge, the State's Attorney, the Police Department, and the jurors confess that they were mistaken and ask for your pardon, it ought to be enough.

I think this should be printed. It ought to be placed in the hands of everyone in California, so far as it can be done. It is not at all likely that the people understand the situation. I hardly know what they could get out in reply. I don't see how they could do anything that could overcome a Judge and a State's Attorney and the case against Oxman.

I presume the question of money will cut some figure. Let me know what it will cost and I will see if I cannot raise the money here. Personally I will pledge myself to \$500.

Very truly yours,  
CLARENCE DARROW.

## JUDGE GRIFFIN'S LETTER

SUPERIOR COURT  
Department Five  
City Hall, San Francisco

January 20, 1928.

Honorable C. C. Young,  
Governor of California,  
Sacramento, Calif.

My Dear Governor:

I have intended for some time to write to you briefly concerning the case of Thomas J. Mooney. So far as the facts are concerned, I cannot add anything to what I have already written to your predecessors in office, Governor Stephens and Governor Richardson.

There is, however, one aspect of the case which, with the greatest respect for your good judgment and opinion, I would discuss with you, and that is, that Mooney should be paroled before his application for pardon is considered. I cannot agree with this position for the reason that, in my opinion, Mooney's case is no different from any other man who has been wrongfully and upon perjured testimony convicted of a crime of which subsequent developments absolutely demonstrate his innocence.

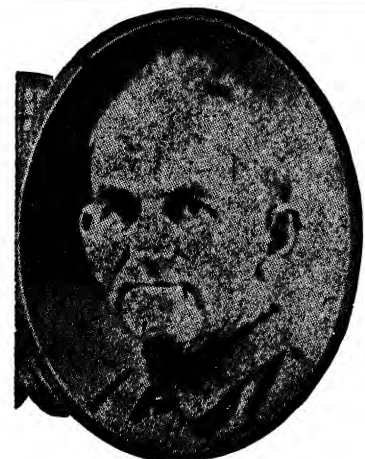
Speaking very frankly, it seems to be that the great obstacle in the way of Mooney's pardon has been his alleged bad reputation. In other words he has been denied real justice because the opinion seems to be prevalent, that he is a dangerous man to be at large and therefore should be, innocent or guilty, kept in prison.

Conceding for the sake of argument that Mooney has been all that he is painted, it is to say the least, most specious reasoning; indeed no reason at all, why Mooney should be denied the justice, which, under our system, is due even the most degraded. Moreover, such a doctrine is more dangerous and pernicious than any Mooney has been accused of preaching.

I hope and trust that the great wrong done Mooney of which I was unwittingly a part, will now without delay, in so far as this State may accomplish it, be remedied.

Very sincerely yours,

FRANKLIN A. GRIFFIN,  
Judge.



MOONEY AFTER 12 YEARS IN PRISON

## TOM MOONEY'S APPEAL

In a Living Grave

My Dear Friends:—

The other evening I was playing a record on the phonograph, Beethoven's "In Questa Tomba Oscura." It was sung by Feodor Chaliapin. It struck me very forcibly. Warren Billings and I are, for all practical purpose, forgotten. We are now rounding out our thirteenth year of the most cruel and unjust imprisonment—and for a crime of which we are absolutely innocent.

My petition for pardon has been in the Governor's office for two years. It has not been read yet. He says it will take him a VERY CONSIDERABLE NUMBER OF MONTHS TO READ IT—in his spare hours. He wrote Judge Griffin that the only time this can be done is during vacation, yet my petition has been in his office during two vacations and is still unread.

I want to publish the documents of my case, now before the Governor, and send them to every registered voter in California. To me this seems to be our only hope.

Will you help me do this? I urgently appeal to every reader of the NEW MASSES to send a contribution to this fund started by Clarence Darrow and a few other friends.

TOM MOONEY.

Send All Funds To

Tom Mooney Molders Defense Committee, P. O. Box 1475, San Francisco



MOONEY AT TIME OF TRIAL

## JUDGE GRIFFIN'S LETTER

SUPERIOR COURT

Department Five

City Hall, San Francisco

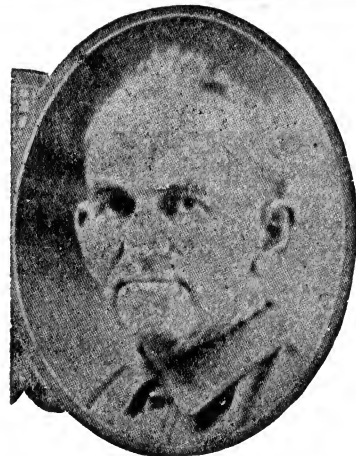
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MOONEY AFTER 12 YEARS IN PRISON



# NEW MASSES

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## WEAVERS OF SILK

(further memoirs of Paterson, N. J.)

By MARTIN RUSSAK

### THE OLD MAN

The old man my grandfather was a model of system and exactness. One could tell the time from his movements. Year in and year out, at precisely the same hour, he ate breakfast slowly and thoughtfully, said a dignified goodbye, and walked slowly and thoughtfully down the street. He looked like an Italian with his dark skin, black eyes, big black mustache, and eternal cigar. He always wore a derby; when the style changed he stuck to his old bowler. His ways were ascertained, smoothly worn, and pleasantly fixed; no change, no caprice of human fashion should affect the little habits upon which his life was solidly built.

He was one of those weavers who get to work with time to spare. Before starting-whistle blew he had his loose ends tied up, his shuttle cleaned, his looms oiled, and a full board of quills on each loom. He was a finished weaver and took a secret pride in his skill; the joy of craftsmanship was his chief joy. He loved to weave a good piece of cloth and never permitted a flaw to pass by, for he hated bad work of any sort.

"What's the trick of sending up a piece with floats and roughness in it?" he would say. "That's all right for a girl or an Irishman, maybe; but I'm a weaver." The cloth that came from his looms was of the first quality.

My grandmother was his second wife and stepmother of his children. They called her "aunt," for they had loved their mother as few mothers have been loved. My grandmother's silver-gray hair was beautiful; it gave a wistful appearance that became this quiet, soft-spoken woman. She was a cook, she worked at weddings and parties. She was religious. On this one point she manifested independence and my grandfather gave in. He allowed her to light candles on Friday night.

Her religion set her apart. To the end of her life she moved about like a stranger in our family.

She was a good servant. One could scold her. She was never in the way. When we noticed her we liked her. She was of those still people who go through life without playing a role in their own lives. She had one sphere of authority: the nook occupied by her mother, my great-grandmother. An old, old woman sitting pillowed in a rocking chair at the back window, fed baked apple out of a spoon by her daughter, peering strangely down at us boys at play among the garbage barrels in the yard, deaf, speechless, never emitting a sound save, sometimes, a smacking of her wrinkled chops.

My grandfather had a set of carpenter's tools and wherever he lived managed to have a workroom or a work-corner of his own.

He divided his time between his tinkering and the saloon. He dreamt of living in a house with a basement, and when he moved into the house on Temple Street he established himself in the snug basement, built shelves for his lumber, a solid work-table, and a chest of drawers for his tools and hardware. He made curiously carved and delicately finished objects of furniture for his own use and for his sons. I would come in to watch him hammering, planing, sawing, whittling, and he would pause to puff at his cigar and chat gravely. He was fond of me; I was his first grandchild.

Beneath his grave exterior and dignified demeanor he was a boy. Jokes and witticisms honeycombed his talk. His stories and puns went the rounds and became famous. A whimsical old man; he could be unrestrainedly funny with an almost tragic air. But he could be as serious as his air. Once when one of his sons yielded to tradition and allowed a newly-born child to be circumcized, he quarreled bitterly with him and for two years remained estranged from him.

I saw little of my grandfather in after years. When I reached independent age as a full-fledged weaver my life set in other directions. I came to see him at intervals, and he received me with dignity, as if I were an ambassador from a foreign king. He had my grandmother put brandy and cakes on the table, and after we toasted each other and drank, he offered me a cigar, saying as he held out the box: "These are the real good ones. Grandfather and Grandson Specials." We lit up from the same match, and talked gravely. He asked after my prospects, and I sat astonished at the old man's witticisms. There were no repetitions; all of them were new.

My grandfather did not indulge in reminiscences, and I could never loosen the tongue that seemed so facile. To the end he lived, consciously, in the present. My grandfather never gave me advice. He supplied me with humor.

He had four sons and two daughters; all had followed him to the City of Silk. Isaac and Nathan were weavers, Joe was a barber, Ben a tailor, Sarah married a twister and Pearl a cap-maker. He kept the respect of his sons, and they helped him through the difficulties of his old age.

### POETRY AND REBELLION

Nathan was the last to arrive in Paterson. He came on a ship's ticket sent to him at Genoa by my father.

He lived in a little garret on Bank Street. I went up there certain evenings to help him with his English. You could stand erect in the middle of the room. The walls looked as if they had



once been white-washed. Opposite the door a single window gave a glimpse of the street; a cot stood on one side against the ceiling that sloped steeply to the cracked floor; on the other side a dresser with books, pictures of Swiss mountains, pine cones odoriferous of balsam, and a photograph of a woman. Near the window, at a little table, his book open under a kerosene lamp, Nathan sat smoking his pipe and running restless fingers through his long, sparse hair.

He read aloud from the book and I corrected his pronunciation. When he came to a word he did not know, I would fail to explain it intelligibly and he looked it up in his German-English dictionary and supplied me with a definition. Each time his keen, expressive eyes looked deprecation and his hand waved rejection.

"Your American schools!" he said. "Now in Germany . . . ! or in France . . . !" I grew drowsy as the evening advanced, and fell into a doze.

"Marty, Mart," he said, shaking me, "sleepy? Just another page, look, and we'll be through with the chapter, and you can go home." He looked at me caressingly and a smile flitted over his handsome face. At the end he gave me a dime for my services. He always had a bright dime on the table, prepared against my visit.

Some evenings I found Nathan stretched on the cot, pale, distressed, staring up at the ceiling. His eyes fell towards me, they seemed to welcome me, but there was no lesson that evening. He motioned me to a chair, and after a silence began to mutter, half to himself.

"Tired . . . tired . . . Can't stand it. Never worked in a factory before, it's killing me. 'You'll get broken in after a while,' your father tells me; 'the beginning is hardest'. Broken in! What am I, an ox? Broken up, maybe; and meantime it's killing me, killing me."

"What a savage place this America of yours is," he continued, in a rising voice. "A wilderness, a desert. Paterson! What a forsaken hole in the mud! The City of Silk, no less. The City of the Living Dead! Dante's hell populated by frozen idiots. God, God, how lonely, how empty, how cold and ugly. Horrible factories, dirty little houses, filthy streets, a stinking river. And the people—always tired and silent. Work, work, work—that's all they know. Brutes; the blood of dogs flows in their veins; not worth spitting on. And that fool your father wasting himself upon them. A union, struggle, strike, revolution. Revolution, yes! I'd be the first one to take a gun. Don't I know the dungeons of the Piaterkover Prison in Lodz? Wasn't I shot, wounded, in 1905? But America, the Golden Land, the City of Silk—it's different, it's dead, its people have been born old and tired. A sty of sensual and stupid slaves!"

He broke off and lay still. Then, covering his eyes with his hand, he spoke again, very softly.

"Today, at the looms, I closed my eyes and saw—far off—the Jungfrau, beautiful, beautiful, her peak shining so pure, so white in the sun. And I saw the spires of Zurich, the blue lake, the glittering sails."

I knew already when I should not question my strange uncle. After a while he rose on one elbow.

"Give me my Heine," he said, pointing to the books on the dresser; "the little red book; that's it. Now bring the lamp over and we'll read some poetry."

He read softly, tenderly, his eyes dimming, his delicate nostrils quivering with emotion. His lips, as they formed each German word, seemed to caress it. With zeal and fervor he explained those verses of his beloved Heine to me, anxious to penetrate me with that foreign music.

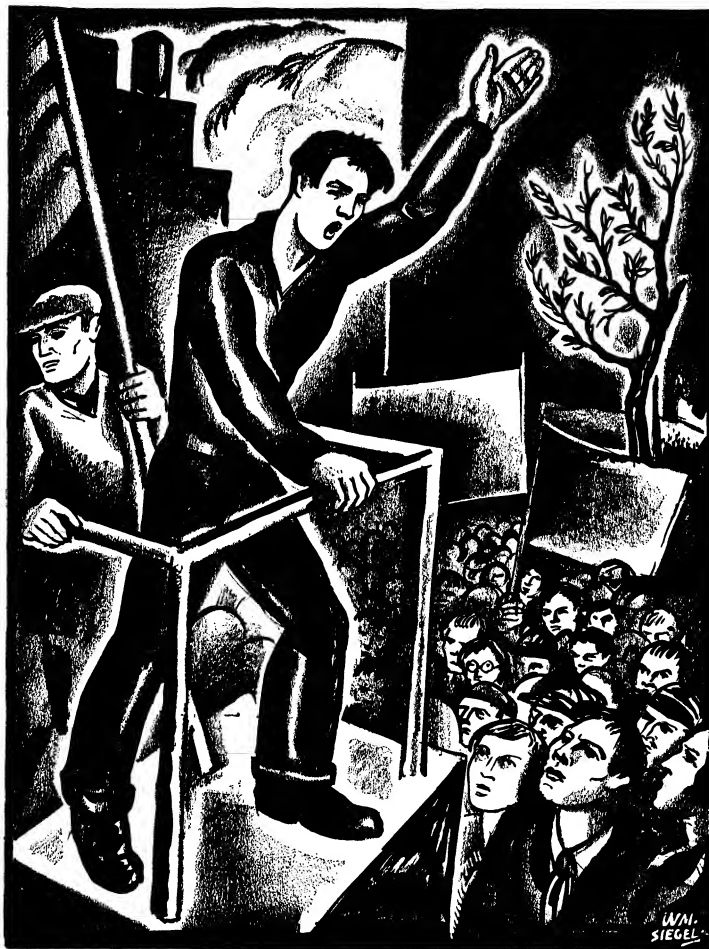
"Ah, how fine, how sweet," he sighed. He stroked my hand as I sat there by him, he looked wonderingly into my face. "The child of Esther and Isaac," he said. "Esther's son! Esther's son!"

Once I asked him who was the woman of the photograph on his dresser. He smiled wanly and deliberated.

"A woman I loved and who loved me," he answered. "It's a long story and a—well, not a happy one. You are too young to understand, Mart; and if you were older I should not be able to tell you."

He came to eat supper at our house. His outlandish manners, his habit of throwing German and French phrases about, his air of strangeness—as if he were a transient visitor among aliens and on the point of leaving for some remote and blissful fatherland of his—puzzled and attracted. At table my father and he made a contrast; my father calm, deliberate, thoughtful; Nathan fiery and voluble, forgetting his food in the midst of speech.

"Come out of your cell, man, and become a human being," my father admonished him. "Heavens, you're no hermit. Always



Drawn by William Siegel

## Proletarian Art

in his garret or up in the Woods. I'll bet it's only as a favor to me that you belong to the Union."

"No, no, can't you understand," Nathan answered; "I tell you there isn't a person in Paterson I can talk to. No one; America is unpopulated."

"Nathan," said my mother, "do you remember Red Henech's house in Berlin, the happy-go-lucky bunch we were, and all that poetical life before you went to France with Heinrich and I came to America? We could have the same thing here if we could live the same carefree way. The yoke, the yoke! It's a heavy one, and we can't dance under it. No, don't answer me now, your soup is getting cold."

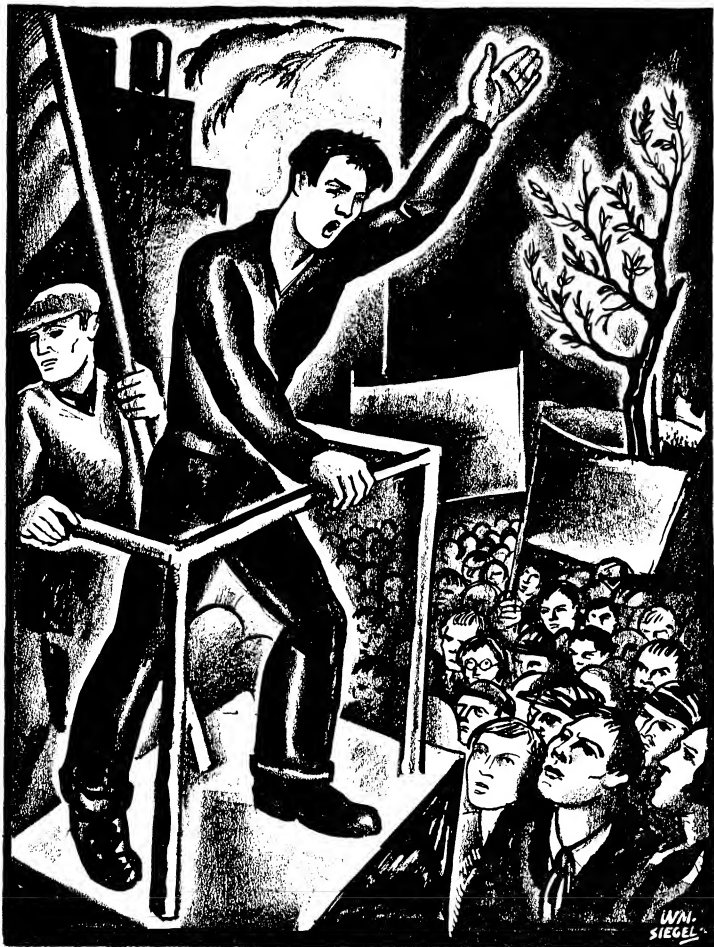
At the end of a meal Nathan would rise and say "Mahlzeit" in the German fashion. He was nick-named "Mahlzeit" and the name stuck.

Nathan liked to remain with my mother when my father ran off to meetings. They sat in the darkening kitchen; night came on, and lights began to blink in the street; they sat and talked of old times and former happiness.

"Esther, Esther! What have the years done to you! Is it you that I have found again in this strange America? Esther the wild, the rebellious; Esther our inspiration, our singer, what has life done to you! The years of toil lie heavy, so heavy upon you, there are lines in your face, you are a mother of children, your shoulders sag, your spirit—your bright spirit!—begins to sag too. Your songs, Esther, where are your songs. Ah, we grow tired and silent; we are captured, we are life-prisoners; soon, soon we shall be feeble and gray."

"I know, Nathan, I know. But we shall never grow old, you and Isaac and I. We shall die young, as our dear comrades have died: Masha and Red Henech and Anna and Bairish and Leon. You are right, we have been captured. But not by life, Nathan; by the mills. And we shall not be free until we have captured the mills. Yes, and now the mills have taken you, too, our last one, the poet and the dreamer, and all your beautiful aspirations, all your love and fire, is a handful of bitter dust. Struggle alone remains to us, Nathan; the time of singing is long past. I have no tears left—only anger."

# NEW MASSES



*Drawn by William Siegel*

**Proletarian Art**

# NEW MASSES



*Drawn by William Siegel*

**Proletarian Art**



# WHO KILLED ROTHSTEIN?

By CHARLES YALE HARRISON

When the modern thug is killed in one of his incessant feuds it is not an uncommon sight to see the corpse borne off on a \$15,000 silver coffin smothered beneath thousands of dollars of floral offerings. If he is a catholic a solemn requiem mass is sung over his bullet-perforated body, priests chant Gregorian hymns and gold-chained incense-burners emit thin spirals of frankincense for the peace of his soul. If he is Jew, throngs follow the hearse through the crowded, narrow East Side streets. Hired mourners weep with bought bitterness over the plain pine-wood coffin as it is lowered into the grave in a choice plot in a fashionable Brooklyn cemetery. An important citizen has departed this life, and the day is an eventful one. Judges and prominent politicians occasionally act as pall-bearers (for was not the late lamented a judge-maker, a hoister of politicians, a politician himself?).

The word *underworld* is a misnomer; today the term *upperworld* would be more apt. High is the gangster's station in life; many are his honors! He has millions of dollars, real estate, cars, a town house and country house, and his mode of living is on a plane befitting a member of the ruling class (which nowadays embraces the gangster-politician). Such a gangster-politician was the late Arnold Rothstein.

How far-reaching was Rothstein's power became known when he staggered out of the servants' exit of the Park Central Hotel, leaned against the wall, squeezed his fist into a gaping hole and vainly tried to stop the gush of blood.

The presidential circus-campaign between Hoover and Smith was at its height at the time. It is interesting to note the relative importance which the newspapers attached to the two events. For nearly a week Rothstein's shooting held the front pages of the New York newspapers (and many of the out-of-town ones) while the windy speeches of the presidential candidates were relegated to the inside pages.

Who killed Arnold Rothstein? became the question of the day. Every newspaperman in New York knows that every "grifter" along Broadway knew who killed the gangster-politician, nearly every editor in New York had more than a well-founded suspicion, nearly every ward heeler knew—and yet days, weeks and months passed and the murderer is still at large.

An underground reign of terror swept the city. Persons who knew of the murderer or could give information leading to his exposure (for arrest was out of the question) were mysteriously bought or rushed out of town, threatened, coerced. Interest in the case ran high. Newspaper reporters who asked pertinent questions were denied admittance to the office of the Police Commissioner. It looked as though New York would witness another Becker case and that some scape-goat would pay with his life for this political murder.

Then a grandiose gesture was made. Police Commissioner Joseph A. Warren was removed from office. Warren was a personal appointee of Mayor James J. Walker and therefore what could be more fitting that the Mayor should write his letter of resignation for him? In Warren's place Grover Whalen was appointed. The brand-new commissioner fumed and blustered and swore that he would have the murderer by the beard within 48 hours. Police captains were discharged, bewildered cops were moved from precinct to precinct and everything was set for the "capture" of the killer. Then came an anti-climax.

Whalen staged a Roman circus. He found an ax, singled out some 75 out of the 23,000 speakeasies in New York, and went about lustily smashing bars and bottles. Bootleg liquor was the big danger that threatened the moral life of the city, he sobbed. This went on successfully for a few days until some of the newspapers in the opposing camp reminded him that his tactics savored somewhat of gangsterism. Then the redoubtable commissioner declared

that the dance-hall constituted a grave menace, then he announced that night-clubs were addicted to unethical methods and promised amazing reforms. In the meantime the newspapers joined in the "game" and devoted columns and columns of free publicity space to the top-hatted ex-department store manager. As a final gesture, a sort of Parthian shot, Whalen made an attempt to solve the traffic problem and suddenly left for Palm Beach to rest after his few weeks of arduous labor. His smoke screen had proved successful. Then a new scandal came shrieking from the headlines, and interest in Rothstein simmered and died down.

Of course a "blind" had been arrested in the case. Any cub reporter will tell you that is an old gag; the "blind" will easily prove his innocence. Eventually, he is freed. Next, please.

At this point it is safe to say again that many giant politicians, editors and millionaires know who killed Arnold Rothstein. But nothing can be done about it—true, the name may be known but the case would never be proved in a New York court for many and obvious reasons.

When the case was at its height rumors and gossip buzzed freely until even the suburbs said: "Sure, we know who killed Rothstein. He was the pay-off man, the 'fixer', the go-between for the big guys. He double-crossed them and so they had to bump him off." This is what office-clerks, house-wives, shop-keepers, dive-keepers and bootleggers said to each other when they met. And any beginner in New York politics will tell you that "you can't buck the machine—it gets you sooner or later."

Well, who was Rothstein? What was his power and whence was it derived? The day before Rothstein was shot he was one of the very few men who could walk up Broadway from 42nd Street and be saluted by every cop and lieutenant en route, a courtesy extended to the Mayor, the Police Commissioner and maybe one or two others.

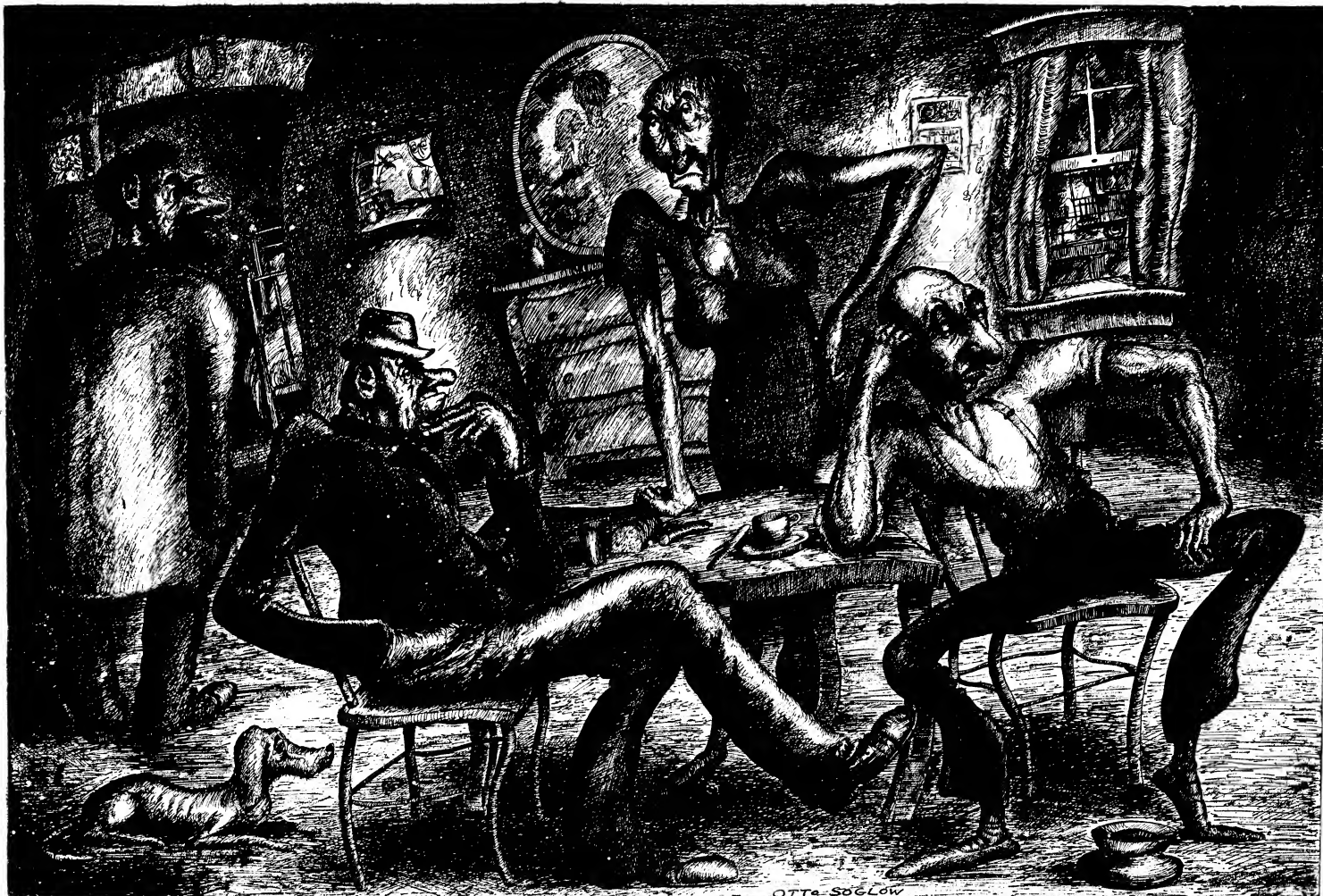
In the twenty-odd years of his successful and sensational career the gangster-politician numbered among his friends and acquaintances such notables as: Peggy Hopkins Joyce, "Nicky" Arnstein, Benjamin de Casseres, Fannie Brice, William Fallon, Gertrude Vanderbilt, T. A. Dorgan, the cartoonist, William Mizner, Frank Ward O'Malley, Hype Igoe, Tex Rickard, judges, Broadway journalists, politicians and so on up and down the line.

When he expired he left behind him more than \$1,500,000, a grieving wife (who receives \$25,000 a year allowance), a blonde "friend," who was one of the chief beneficiaries in his will. Rothstein dealt in dope, liquor, stolen bonds. His henchmen stuffed ballot-boxes, he supplied lesser gangsters to employers with which to break strikes. In short he was all-powerful, and no matter how often "honest citizens" went to the polls to vote for "honest and able candidates," Rothstein still maintained himself in power. Indeed, so important was his position and so powerful his hold that nothing short of a 38-calibre bullet would serve for his undoing.

Rothstein is dead but the gangster-political method of "government" still goes on. Nothing but a social revolution in America can ever break its power. I think of the Rothsteins, the Frankie Yales, the Scarface Caponis who are vital cogs in the ruling machines and then I think of the dishwater twaddle of "victory by the ballot," and I become ill with nausea.

I felt that way reading a book\* on the Rothstein case written by a press agent for a movie concern and published (of all publishers!) by the Vanguard Press. The author frankly worships at the feet of the late gangster-politician. He admires and envies the "easy money" which was Rothstein's, he conceals badly his admiration for Rothstein's "daring" at the gambling table, his conquests with women, his flouting of "the law." The book is hastily and badly written. It expresses the crass Broadway viewpoint, very much in vogue at the moment. It is cheap, trashy and sensational. It would have a big sale among the more illiterate tabloid readers if it had a few pictures here and there.

\* In the *Reign of Rothstein*, Vanguard Press. \$2.50.



Drawn by Otto Soglow

### The "New Masses" Staff in Conference

Flashlight of sorrow! Gloom! Despair!! Rage! And thought! Deep thought! Two pay days have past and no pay! Hoover's election! Mussolini! Invasion of Nicaragua! Congress! Cruisers! The next war! It's a rotten old world, comrade, let's go to Paris and die! (Signed) Otto Soglow.

At no point in his book does the author show any awareness of the political or sociological implications of a figure like Rothstein. At one point he repeats the lie spread by Matthew Woll of the National Civic Federation and sometimes of the American Federation of Labor, that the left wing bribed the New York police during the fur strike in 1927 and that Rothstein was the go-between.

The following is a sample paragraph of Clarke's style:

"If you think you are in love with a charming creature, and you haven't known her and her family from childhood, tell her how much you love her in the middle of the street when no one is around. And when you are thinking 'itty bitsy ducky' pretties don't perpetuate them in ink, unless you wouldn't mind hearing them read some time perhaps by an unsympathetic lawyer before twelve of your peers and a judge—not to mention reading them in your newspaper."

### LINES FOR A CERTAIN DICTATOR TO SCOWL AT

Where is the wolf that gave you pap  
o cinema of terror  
o amplified voice of anger  
o proud distended balloon

The laughters of Romulus and Remus  
hover like humming dragon-flies  
over the dark and oily waters of the Tiber

Come! Come! It's high time all  
the little pirates were in bed  
now I lay me.

—WILLIAM CLOSSON EMORY.

### SMOKE

Slowly and silently creeps the smoke  
Over the city of wheels  
Brooding and menacing, it lies, and heavy  
Cold scrutiny at a reveler's gayety  
Over and around, it weaves its endless train  
Through the crowning peaks of the city's pride  
Church spires.  
The prayers of the smug rise up through them.  
To meet the glory of salvation  
Church spires, inverted funnels.  
Factory chimneys.  
The heat of a thousand lifeless bodies  
Pushes up through them. Jungle stench  
Pouring up through the chimneys.  
It clashes with the prayers  
And beats a frantic measure  
On the drum of heaven; the sound of a savage tom-tom.  
Over and around them winds the smoke  
Lurking and filling in the great gaps  
Between steeple and chimney  
Ghostlike, it creeps through  
With its abrupt, catlike movements.  
Heavily it crouches, and dull  
Pregnant with eternities  
Ages of darkness and misery  
Ages of silence and bowed heads  
The weight of ages of oppression  
Looming, a mass-spectre in the great Smoke.

HELEN KOPPEL



OTTE SOGLOW

Drawn by Otto Soglow

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# IN A RUSSIAN TRAIN

By **HALLIE FLANAGAN\***

"You can't know Russia unless you travel 'hard,' my friends tell me—and are inconsistently distressed because I buy a third class ticket from Moscow to Leningrad. After a day of Russian farewells, compounded of tears, kisses on either cheek, gifts, philosophizing on life, death, meeting, parting, sorrow and joy, I am sealed into a narrow cell with two planks facing each other and two planks which let down for upper berths. The compartment is conspicuously sanitary, though I find it a trifle depressing to reflect that the strong medical odor which takes the place of air is due to the government edict that carriages occupied by 'hard' passengers must be daily scrubbed out with antiseptics. My traveling companions prove to be three: a woman from the provinces in layers of shawls and mysterious head-wrappings; an imposing Soviet officer with service stripes and gleaming cavalry boots; and a blue bloused worker with a basket of apples, which he consumes in number truly awe inspiring.

The advantage of traveling 'hard' is at once apparent. I have voluntarily become one of them and they accept me as such, plying me with friendly questions. The Soviet officer speaks a little English, the woman speaks German, the tovarish speaks not a word, but presses apples upon us with great cordiality until he presently retires to an upper plank and to unabashed and audible slumber.

We talk as if lack of a common language is in no way a barrier, as, indeed, it is not the greatest barrier. The woman has been visiting her son in Moscow; she dislikes what she saw there and is at no pains to conceal it. Once her son was a wealthy man, his wife had fine clothes, they did nothing all day but ride about to great dinners given by their rich friends; now they are all poor, they must work, and live crowded together, and wear coarse clothes such as formerly their servants wore. The good days for Russia are over, she declares, and the least said about the present state of affairs, the better. The representative of the criticized government listens with apparent amusement, though of course, I have no way of ascertaining whether he later shot her in the back, as, according to the *London Daily Mail*, he assuredly would have done.

The interest of the officer seems to be at present, dramatic rather than political. He is writing a play which is to be a satire on war, performed without words, entirely by military formations, which are to result, logically enough but rather startlingly, in the destruction of everybody, including the onlookers.

The woman from the provinces finds his drama sleep inducing and asks whether she may retire. She fears to sleep below because she has a horror of the upper plank collapsing, as, she assures me with dramatic gesture, it often does. I eye her vast girth apprehensively as, creaking and puffing, she disappears from view. The Soviet army now gravely removes its boots, first gallantly insisting that I make a mattress of the voluminous army coat. The light is snapped out, the compartment is lit by faint moonlight, and I lie reflecting upon the curiousness of life. Here am I, eating the apples of one comrade, sleeping upon the coat of another, and in momentary danger of being completely annihilated by the collapse of a third. Tovarish, indeed! I am at last becoming a part of Russia.

These sentimental reflections are shattered by a terrific jolt and crash, and the train stops dead. There is a long pause, as of bewilderment on the part of the train officials. The pause prolongs itself to such alarming proportions that I recall the sentence in the Soviet guide: "If any train in the U.S.S.R. reaches its destination five days (or was it fifty?) later than due, the money of the passengers will be partially refunded." Gradually, one by one, the trainmen spill out. They walk back and forth, stamping on the snow, blowing on their fingers. They discuss the situation mournfully, gathering in groups, gesticulating toward the train. From the uncurtained window I can see that we are in the middle of a snowfield, and here, it appears, we are to stay. The trainmen seem to have given it up as a bad job: they retreat, build a

fire in the snow, and sit around it, indulging in black bread, yellow bottles, and an avalanche of talk.

At first I am indignant. In any other country in the world, I think in irritation, something would be done about the train balking like a donkey. A telegram would be sent, a committee would be appointed, the train would be taken apart and put together again, a new train would be made—*something* would be done. But since it is Russia, though the thermometer is bursting, they will sit down and talk it over.

Gradually I sink into a sort of Russian-ness, born of moonlight on snow, and the rise and fall of Slavic voices. After all, what is time? What matter whether we reach our destination tomorrow? Time is nothing . . . time is nothing . . . annoying if one is keeping an engagement, but glorious if one is shaping a new world. What is a decade, more or less, to a Georgian who traces his lineage historically to Noah and mythologically to Jason and Medea? We, who are slaves of time, who think in terms of schedules, desk calendars, extra fare trains, come into a land which thinks in terms of centuries. Show us everything you have done in ten years, we demand. The Russian smiles, patiently: yes, but what is a span of ten years? merely a passing expression on the face of history. How many schools, factories, diet kitchens, tramcars in Moscow? Not enough, the Russian answers, and not good enough, but let us show you the plans of those we are to build in 1940. Nonsense, we cry, these people are not efficient, they will never get anywhere. By this we mean that they will not get where we are. Nor will they, nor, inconceivable as it may seem to us, do they wish to.

"Astrological mentality" Junius Wood calls it. Their eyes are on a star and they stumble through the dark and the dirt to get to it . . . But as for us, we cannot stop to build fires in the snow. to ponder over what is wrong with the train, to ask whither we are bound . . .

After several hours it happens, as it occasionally does, that an idea is born of talk. Someone crawls under the train and tickles it with a stick and immediately all is well. The train resumes its nonchalant course into the unknown.



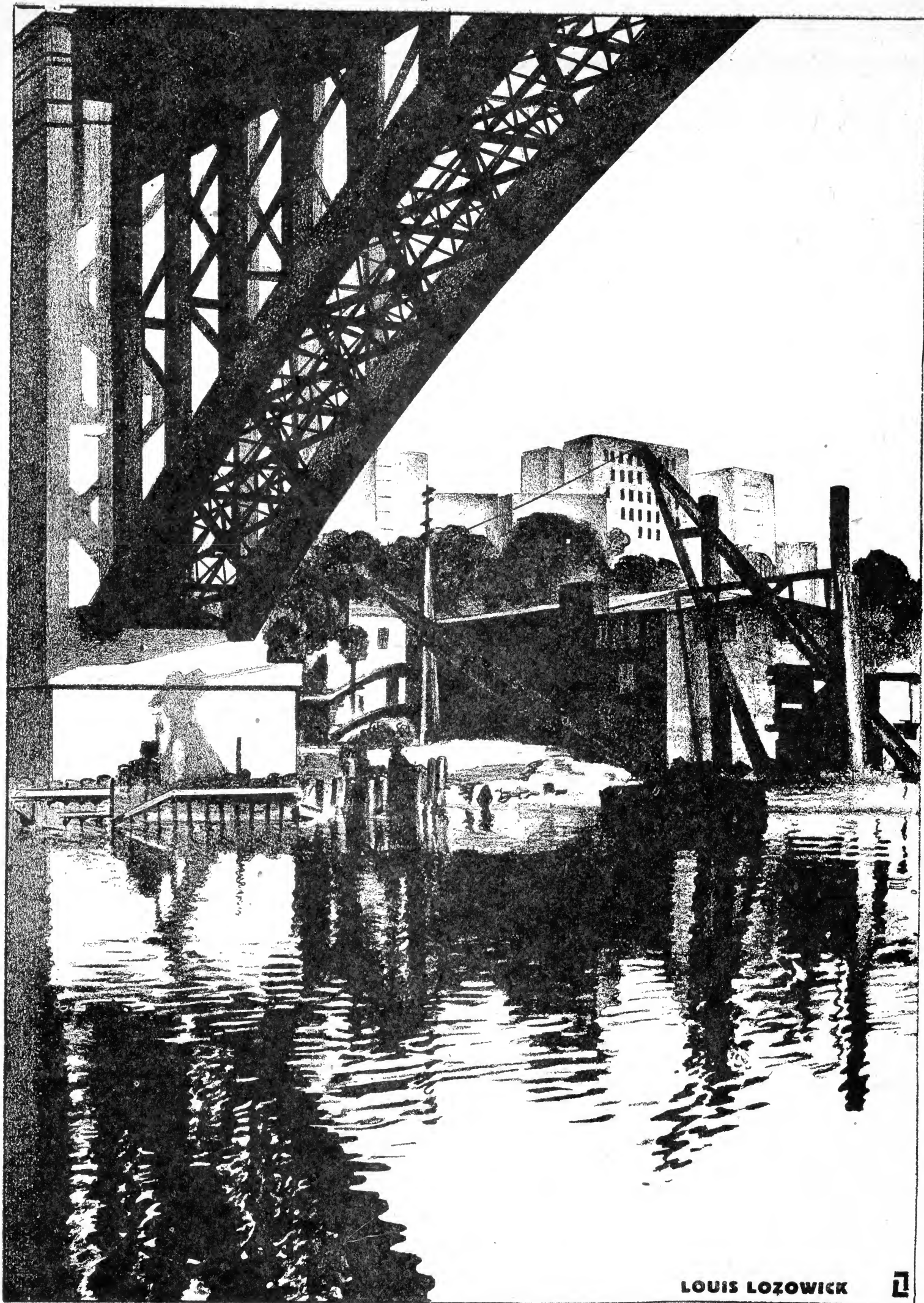
\* From "Shifting Scenes" by Hallie Flanagan. Coward-McCann.

Drawn by William Gropper



*Drawn by William Gropper*





LOUIS LOZOWICK



## OSWALD THE BALD

By H. H. LEWIS

## PRELUDE

*This is a dirge of deep despair,  
An oozy ode to thinning hair,  
About a head becoming bare  
While even young.  
Oh, on what else than total death  
Was sadder tale by poet sung?  
I kiss the harp, I muster breath:  
(Pling . . . . plang . . . . plung.)*

*The leaves of summertime must go,  
The handsome leaves, a lovely show,  
When the fall comes;  
And trees in hapless woe  
Must let them be shed;  
And hairs must quit a human head  
When the call comes.*

*Yeah, heaping full his cup of grief  
Whose crowning glory stuffs away,  
Nevermore to return;  
His plight is wretched to discern  
Who, hunting round, finds no relief  
For withered dermic hay.*

*One by one, from sun to sun,  
He counts the dropping strands,  
His darlings prematurely done,  
Fallen to trembling hands.  
The mirror tells the ghastly truth:  
Going, going, gone!—  
The worst predicament of youth,  
Something to sing about, forsooth,  
And groan at length upon.*

## NARRATIVE

*A punk aesthete, a nice young man,  
Looking at life from a silk divan,  
A poet (pox upon his clan!)  
Was slowly getting bald,  
Slowly getting bald;  
His wakeful thoughts forever ran:  
"I'm slowly getting bald."  
And even through his harrowed sleep  
The goblin of himself would creep,  
Its head completely bald.  
Then he would rise and pace and weep:  
"Bald, bald, bald!"*

*Yet hope survived to make it worse,  
To deepen and prolong the curse.  
He carried on with earnest vow:  
"Dear me, I never must allow  
The realization of my fears."  
So he went to work in frantic haste  
To stop the mortifying waste  
Of beauty above the ears.*

*Shampoos of sundry brands were tried,  
Including Watkin's Mulsified,  
And Dandruff Doom.  
Empty bottles littered his room.  
Of tonic fakes he bought a lot  
And rashly doused the offending spot  
With Wildroot, Growit and what not,  
Besides Eau de Cologne.  
He sent to Lady Gyp and got  
A recipe of her own.*

*But whelming seas of K. D. X.—  
A pint was drained by poor Oswald—  
Could not restore one single hair  
On Triton's caput, were he bald.  
A constant rain of Danderine  
Or cloudbursts pouring Liquid Arvon  
Could not have eased the kind of drought,  
In which poor Osie's head was starvin'.*

*"Tut, tut, these label-lies!" he stormed,  
"I know a different game."  
With brush and comb he raked his dome  
Till the blue blood came  
And the tear of anguish formed.  
He rubbed his fingers to the quick;  
He worried on, becoming sick;  
He hired a Turk massager,  
A hefty bruiser, tall and thick,  
A darkly sullen codger.  
The Turk, Allah, hated those  
Who flaunt the damn aesthetic pose  
And simper through a sonnet.  
He frayed the gentle poet's nob,  
Hurrah! he made it burn and throb,  
He put a scab upon it!  
Hoooo!  
Attaboy, Turk!  
He skinned that cocoa with a cob!  
Poor Osie! Ouch! Doggone it!*

*But still the gleaming fact remained  
That he was getting bald;  
This hard and cruel obsession reigned:  
"I'm slowly getting bald,  
Bald, bald, bald."*

*A barren pate, I've heard it said,  
Reveals the lack of vital force—  
When Bacchus weeps the tears of lead  
And Venus sorrows too, of course.  
Well, Oswald went to see a girl,  
A flapper lively as a squirrel,  
Who vexed the soul of Waldy.  
She cried with sudden roguish whirl:  
"Oh say, why, hello—Baldy!"  
He felt the cut; it halved his heart  
And knocked the bleeding halves apart.  
"Gwendolyn! I'm a man of art!  
Don't speak that way to me!"  
"Pooh, pooh, old egg, what funny woids!  
Me like that cocoa bare and slick?  
You're better with your hat on—quick!  
Go strut the big cravat awhile,  
Go listen to the purty boids,  
Go write a po-em for The Dial:  
You're not a man, by gee!"*

*Horrible! Had it come to this,  
The dread unmaking of the man?  
Does need of hair annul a kiss  
From poet on a silk divan?  
Well anyhow, he bore the mark  
Of manhood in depletion—  
Worst of plights when one delights  
In having many a luscious lark  
Of intimate discretion.*

*Disconsolate, he staggered home  
To weep upon his mother's breast.*

With loving palm she hugged his dome:  
 Dear mothers are not like the rest!  
 And hope revived, so pure and sweet,  
 From out the terror of defeat.  
 Joy, even joy, came close behind.  
 Again he rose, the optimist,  
 Put out a weak jaw, made a fist  
 And vowed a remedy to find.

Auto-suggestion's Gallic lure  
 Now promised him a handsome cure.  
 He learned to say:  
 "In every way  
 I'm getting better, day by day;  
 The hairs are coming back to stay.  
 (It's rather slow, I guess, but sure.)"

Then Christian Science came begirt  
 In spotless white, that holy skirt,  
 With teachings in her hand.  
 She purred of Mind up Yonder and  
 Of the health it can exert,—  
 One of Eddy's healing band.  
 She pointed through the why and how  
 And prayed a little while;  
 Then, like an angel calm of brow,  
 Saying, "You need not pay me now,"  
 She tenderly picked up her Book  
 And, with a far I'm-coming look,  
 Eased out with a smile.

For several years he goaded faith  
 In Father, Son and Holy Wraith;  
 Converted to the thought of Good  
 That never fails when understood.  
 (You understand, when understood  
 The Truth will bring us only good,  
 For Eddy told us that it would—  
 When thoroughly understood.)

But hair, in spite of all, is hair  
 To grow or die unheeding prayer,  
 And fool is he who wastes a care  
 When it starts to drop.  
 Poor Waldy's now was more than thin.  
 He never yearned for sense within  
 But for hairs on top.  
 Hardly a dozen were retained  
 Of adolescence's thriving crown.  
 Beneath, a "derby-rest" remained,  
 A sordid fringe of brown—  
 "A worthy base to build upon,  
 Restoring fully what is gone"—  
 A fringe to bait the hoping clown!  
 By Tantalus deceived and pained,  
 The damndest fool in town!  
 His nob was like a knoll of clay  
 From which the grasses die away,  
 Here and there a scrawny weed.  
 So, vexed to rages at the Word,  
 His plea for ringlets yet unheard,  
 He kicked out Eddy's creed.

Then Doom's recurring cry:  
 "Poor Oswald the Bald!  
 From now until you die,  
 Bald, bald, bald!  
 How can you be a poet  
 Without the hair to show it,  
 Without the sort that Bion  
 Shook as he twanged his lute?  
 How can you be a social lion  
 Without the mane to suit?  
 Bald, shamefully bald!  
 You once had locks of glory,  
 But now it's a sad, sad story:  
 Poor Oswald . . . . .  
 You're Bald."

Driven to fatalistic thought,  
 The worm in Osie turned and fought:

"However long the search may be,  
 Somewhere within this wide, wide world,  
 In root or pod, somewhere is furred  
 A splendid cure awaiting me.  
 And find that cure I must and will,  
 I must and will, or take me, Death!"  
 Thus Baldy sternly vowed—until  
 Another notion caught his breath;  
 Insidious and sly as sin,  
 Came this temptation sneaking in:  
 "Why not a wig? . . . . why not, indeed?  
 Many a blade thus hides his need.  
 A nice toupee—I could endure  
 That substitute before the cure."

So he purchased one and laid it on,  
 Then with an unaffected air  
 Peeped sidelong at the mirror;  
 He whirled about to full-faced stare,  
 Excitedly jumped nearer:  
 Ye Gods! Adonis back again,  
 Still beaming handsomest of men—  
 The same, if older, full of "class."  
 His heart with joy went leaping then:  
 The thing would pass!

He glued it down and gave it scent  
 Like that which barbers give a gent.  
 A pinch of salt dashed on his coat  
 Appeared like many a brushed out mote  
 Of common, normal "dander."  
 Tugged up to suit the older girls,  
 But without a hat to hide his curls,  
 He went off whistling down the street,  
 Where dwelt a widow growing sweet,  
 One Mrs. Wanna Gander.

Oho, was she goosey? Aaaaah boy!  
 Goosey, goosey, playing coy!  
 A sultan's dream, a magnet of curves,  
 Mobile as jelly, sweet as preserves;  
 Warm like the Grapes of Naishapur,  
 The Golden Apples of the Sun;  
 And all the graces had drawn to her  
 To keep their famed salon in one.

As bees will buzz to probe the flower,  
 Maybe a dozen at a time,  
 Men burned to know how sweet the nectar  
 Stored by that soft and olive prime.  
 From too much billing, cooing, doving,  
 Her mate had died from too much loving.  
 No male who saw her could withstand her.  
 And such were the charms of Wanna Gander.

The month was halcyon May  
 With bright affectionate hours;  
 And Osie's heart was gay  
 And bloomed like the tender flowers:  
 Then with superlative charms  
 Came June—  
 And Waldy again to Wanna's arms  
 On a Sunday afternoon.

(Pling . . . . plang . . . . plang.  
 Tra la la, um tee dee.  
 Coo cooooo.  
 The cherubs' ethereal cries  
 Came softly from paradise;  
 The Sapphic dove from her bower sprang  
 And soared away in the blue.)

So when her fingers smote the keys  
 Curl-crowned Adon, by ardor wrung,  
 Strained to the glad prompting pleas,  
 Singing as he had never sung.  
 The ocean of love is boundless  
 And stirs to a depth unknown:  
 Within the deeps that are soundless  
 I dumbly crave you alone.  
 For every look of emotion,



*In true love's profound devotion  
Ten thousand more are there.  
And when she trailed the music off  
And looked up to his face  
And smiled an yielding smile—  
Her lips to eager folds returning,  
Her olive cheeks with roses burning,  
And all her being toward him yearning . . . . .  
He kissed her hand with delicate grace  
And all that poetic style!*

*This brought the Grecian curls to view,  
Entwined, superb, exotic;  
She whiffed their scent erotic  
And ran her lily fingers through,  
Deeming his were the grandest far  
That ever crowned a Lochinvar,  
And casting thrills that felt divine,  
Keen tremors down the poet's spine.  
(Speaking of what should happen later,  
He was a fine anticipator.)*

*Now they were in the toils of love,  
The winding, binding coils of love,  
Each by the other pressed;  
For he had bruskiy caught her  
While she played her timid best,  
Had rudely, madly brought her  
Flying to his angry chest  
To seal his lips to hers,  
To seal his lips to hers,  
To seal his lips to hers and draw  
Her flesh and soul to him!*

*It seemed he never could let go,  
Swaying with her to and fro,  
In love a wild erotic pig.  
In wild love's pounding passion, he,  
Torn from his wits, no longer well,  
Grew pallid, shuddered, fainted, fell!  
And in their sudden falling, she  
Grabbed the wig!*

*Oh mercy, mercy! What a boon  
Had poet Oswald died aswoon,  
Melted away on Wanna's kiss  
To harp in Heaven of earthly bliss!  
For when he opened blinky eyes  
There stood the disillusioned dame  
Clutching the jerked-off crown of shame,  
A snarling fury of surprise.  
She made the wig a ruin complete  
And tramped the bits upon the floor;  
She cursed him struggling to his feet,  
Then pointed at the door.  
He shrank, with fingers on his head  
He shrank! the ignoble fainter sick,  
And forward-reeling wildly fled,  
Hastened by a goodly kick.*

*Bald! Bald! Bald!  
Pity the hatless wight!  
A group of urchins on the beat,  
Tormenting hoodlums of the street,  
Ragged him in hoarse delight.*

*Bald! Bald! Bald!  
And every smile and every look  
On casual faces he mistook;  
The sparrows seemed to twitter fun  
And flock deriding after;  
A poodle barked, a parrot jeered;  
And the very tree limbs, so he feared,  
Were pointing at his fate!  
Now faster fled the taunted one.  
The city rocked with laughter.  
His pate, his horrid pate!*

(Pling . . . . plang, plang,

*Ping bang, ping bang-bang!  
O harper's crescendic ire!  
Give me another string—  
Another lyre!)*

*The furies of hate, theimps of hell,  
The flying serpents of despair,  
The bees that sting the woe-begone,  
They buzzed insanelly till he fell,  
They barked his frightful need of hair  
And scourged him up and on and on,—  
As satirists of ancient Greece  
And angry orators of Rome  
Hounded their enemies from home  
To exile and decease.*

*Dodging as if a wretch of crime,  
He came upon the zoo,  
Where creatures yawn, from time to time,  
Abysmally at you.  
Sulking as if to cheat the laws—  
His head, . . . he would forsake it;  
So he rammed a lion's yawning jaws  
And let the lion take it.*

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## EPILOGUE

*Let not a single tear be shed  
Nor mourners' crepe unfurled:  
Merely a punk aesthetic dead—  
Good riddance to the world.  
Cut out the sermon, blaa the bunk  
And speed him to the spot:  
Another fine aesthetic punk—  
Good riddance. Let him rot.*

## WHAT THEN?

*Canaille!  
Rushing about with dollar drugged eyes,  
Lecherously licking up a virgin country's natural resources.  
Swallowing rivers, lakes, mountains, forests, wells, fields, veins  
of ore.  
Straining out dollars, after a hasty digestive process.  
So they can carry too large diamonds to their wenches.  
Build too large houses,  
And send their vacuous brats to gaudy schools—for polishing . . .  
That they may be sold at top prices,  
In social assignation houses.  
These dollar stalking cockatrices,  
Creating the world's most melancholy spectacle,  
Of greed and bad taste and stupid vulgarity.  
Cunningly seducing dollars from each other.  
Debasing themselves before each other,  
Willing to commit acts of perversion upon each other—for dollars . . .  
Eager to part with honor in order to extort dollars, swindle dollars,  
wheedle dollars.  
Calling the ghastly process "Service!"  
What are they going to do, presently—  
When, like gluttonous children turned loose in candy stores,  
They all have their dollars:  
When everyone has surfeit of dollars,  
And the standardized, disintegrating toys dollars are good for;  
When material things no longer predicate enviable prestige;  
When millionaires and billionaires and trillionaires  
Are as numerous as ash cans—  
And money is no longer the thing that will make the neighbors  
envious . . .  
What are they going to do, these frantic grubs,  
When Americans have all the money in the world?  
And dollars turn to dust!*

—JACK WOODFORD

# EINSTEIN AND THE PRESS

By J. K. FORD

The New York *Herald-Tribune* has published a cable from Berlin transmitting the complete text of Professor Albert Einstein's pamphlet "A Unified Field Theory." This is the first time that complicated physical and mathematical formulæ were sent by cable for publication in the popular press. When it was announced that Einstein had completed his efforts to find a unified law covering gravitation and electricity, the press at first published summaries and explanations by German professors. These explanations were made entirely in general literary terms, and involved no mathematical formulæ. They were therefore easy to cable and were of little scientific value. The *Herald-Tribune*, anxious to beat its competitors by an unusual journalistic feat, had its Berlin correspondent cable the text of Einstein's paper, including numerous complicated mathematical terms composed of Greek and Roman letters. The *Herald-Tribune's* Berlin correspondent translated Einstein's text. He then had a German scientist translate the mathematical formulæ into words which were incorporated into the cable. When the cable arrived in New York, an expert in the *Herald-Tribune's* employ turned these words back into mathematical formulæ. Such formulæ, however, cannot be set up in newspaper type. They were therefore drawn by hand as illustrations and reproduced by the usual method. The full text of Einstein's paper then appeared as an illustrated article—with the mathematical formulæ as illustrations.

The correspondent of the New York *Evening Post* in Berlin sent the first page of Einstein's paper by radio-photography; this was reproduced in the *Post*, but was so blurred that it was impossible to follow, especially for those who cannot read German, and it did not supply the full text of Einstein's paper.

These journalistic stunts cannot be said to have increased many Americans' knowledge of Einstein's theory. Its chief effect was to mystify and impress the public. In fact, the press increased the mystification by repeating in nearly all its stories on the subject that there are only about a dozen men in the whole world who can understand Einstein's work. And indeed, the mathematical formulæ are so complicated and the speculations so abstruse that it can be safely said that not a single editor of the *Herald-Tribune*, or any other newspaper, understood the cables they so proudly published. It is equally certain that, with the possible exception of a handful of scientists, the readers of the press did not have the slightest idea what Einstein's theory was all about. His paper is so brief, so concentrated, and so full of complex formulæ, it refers to so many recent discoveries and assumptions in physics and mathematics, that its very terminology is a mystery to the general reader.

Science in the United States, as in all bourgeois countries, is the monopoly of a "priestly caste" which covers its speculations with a hocus-pocus of cabalistic jargon. The genuine scientist, compelled to work with abstruse formulæ incomprehensible to untrained minds, is at the mercy of this mysticism that has gathered around science.

In addition to mystifying and impressing the public, the *Herald-Tribune's* journalistic feat also satisfied the usual desire of the press to beat its competitors at anything which has aroused general interest. It also satisfied the American sporting instinct, which, without understanding a word of Einstein's paper looks on it as something which breaks a record. The sporting passion for breaking records is so great in this country that people do all sorts of things, even more incomprehensible than Einstein, to obtain publicity as record-breakers. Thus a number of record-breaking Americans have completed to see who could sit longest on a flagpole; a 17-year old girl piloted an airplane 18 hours so as to beat the record of another girl by one hour; contests are held to see who can eat the greatest number of pies, sausages, or maize; there has been a dancing marathon lasting several weeks; and even a contest to see who could talk the longest amount of time. Whoever breaks a record, in no matter how trivial a field, is mentioned and often photographed in the press. For this reason, Einstein, so incomprehensible to the reader of the press, is never-

theless beloved as a champion. He is the Jack Dempsey of physics who has just scored another victory, giving the knockout blow to antiquated electro-gravitational theories; and the *Herald-Tribune* scored a victory over the other American newspapers by cabling the first "ringside" report detailing the fight "blow by blow."

Underneath this journalistic stunt, this cabling and publication of incomprehensible equations and formulæ, rests the general tendency of capitalist society to exalt the position of science. Modern industry, dependent upon scientific research and scientific processes, must spend vast sums upon laboratories and research institutions. The funds for the support of such institutions must be collected from the surplus profits of industry, from individual wealthy "philanthropists," and from the general public in taxes. Therefore the necessity for the "popularization" of science, the need to exalt the prestige of the scientists as valuable persons whose work deserves public financial support. Where formerly the public were to be persuaded to contribute to the support of churches and clergy, now they must be persuaded likewise to support scientists and laboratories. The scientists thus tend to supplant the functions and social position of the priests. At the same time the large capitalists, unready yet to abandon the assistance of church and clergy in holding the masses in subjection, nevertheless tend to remove their support from the more reactionary clerical groups, the "fundamentalists" who deny the validity and value of scientific research. Instead, the Rockefellers and others give their support to the so-called "modernist" churches which "accept" the theory of evolution, and which pretend to "reconcile" science and religion.

## OLD GIN By ART SHIELDS

The barn where the mulatto rebel ran amuck with his pitchfork has rotted away. But heart of oak and longleaf pine are tough, so we found some fragments of the old slave plantation buildings surviving near Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

Adam the carpenter who chummed with us at our camp fire knew all these old timber ghosts and liked to visit them. He took us one day to see the ruins of the Hargreave cotton gin, built more than a century ago on a hill a mile away. "It will show you how men worked in the old slavery days," said he as we followed the narrow road along the wild strawberry patch to the hill.

We stood by the wreckage. Adam had torn down the gin some years before. It was a job for the present owner who wanted the lumber and cared nothing for antiquities. A 16-foot wooden cog wheel stuck out of the tangled beams. Adam reconstructed the ancient ginning scene.

"That was the power wheel," he said, "20-slave power." Twenty black men whose fathers, grandfathers or perhaps themselves had been kidnapped in Africa trod the circle here, their shoulders pressed against levers projecting the horizontal wheel. Gears transmitted the power to the second floor where the ginning machine tore the seed from the cotton balls.

Adam had the craftsman's eye for fine workmanship. He pointed out the precise joining of wood to wood, with seldom a bolt or nail. The eight-foot beams that served as spokes for the power wheel were morticed so snugly into the heavy hub that bolts or nails were not needed. The white oak cogs fitted equally tightly into the pine wheel rim, without glue or iron to bind them. "Slave carpenters did that," said Adam, "with white mechanics working alongside for 25 cents a day. Labor was cheap, but nails cost too much in those days."

Nothing but the foundations of squared oak timber were left of



Woodcut by Gan Kolski

## THE BREADMAKERS

the Hargreave mansion on the crest of the hill a hundred yards away. Adam had torn the house down. A bull frog plunked into the pond that had been a cellar as we came up. Here the owner kept his corn whiskey and perhaps some home-made wine. There had been seven rooms in the two-story house. It was a rude affair a Buick salesman would despise, built of squared logs throughout, with red clay stuffed between, and the walls within unpapered and unpainted.

The Hargreave family had two or three hundred slaves. They lived in the "quarters," now vanished. A family to each one-room cabin, like many colored tenant farmers today. They raised cotton and tobacco, corn and wheat. They worked under the lash of the overseer.

Adam gossiped of the slave overseers as we sat on the 12 by 12 oak timber that had been the lintel of the front door. His great grandfather was an overseer for many years in a neighboring county and was celebrated for his ferocity and strength.

"Nobody could whip my great grandfather," said Adam. "He fought them all. Fought at the fairs. The powerful fighters of those days traveled from one fair to another to see who was the best man. He was the biggest and roughest man in the country, two hundred and sixty pounds in his shirt sleeves, raw boned. When he fought he fought. And every time he got a man down he gouged an eye out."

"Did he fight for money?" I asked.

"Hell no," said Adam. "He liked to fight."

He talked of his ancestor's job as the stories had come down

through his grandfather to his father, a retired carpenter still living at Chapel Hill.

"Up before day and getting the slaves to the fields. Riding around on a big horse and all dressed up in good clothes with his pistols and his rawhide whip. He'd whip 'em too, if they didn't work fast. He was mean. No doubt in the world he was mean. And when I say mean I mean MEAN."

But one morning a slave almost got him. The overseer went to the barn on some errand, forgetting to take his pistol. Adam continued, "A big yellow nigger saw his chance. My great grandfather whipped him once and near killed him. When he saw the old man come in without his pistol he ran at him with the manure fork. The wild six-foot nigger chased him all around the barn. One more minute he'd a had him in a corner and that fork sticking through him. Just then my grandfather, a big boy, came in with the gun. He had heard the old man hollering. He covered that nigger with the gun. They tied him up and threw him into a pen. They beat that nigger until he died."

The mulatto rebel was dropped into some forgotten grave like those we visited in a wooden hollow at the foot of the hill on our way home. A few graves were marked by unlettered boulders. Out of one grew a two-foot pine trunk. "Folks think this was the burial place of the Hargreaves slaves," said Adam as we brushed through the poison ivy and the bushes under the pines. "But nobody knows any more. It might be an old Indian graveyard."



**THE BREADMAKERS**

*Woodcut by Gan Kolski*



# HALLELUJAH, I'M A BUM!

(A Scene from a Proletarian Play)

By PAUL PETERS

## SCENE 3.

(In a large tent are many cots, close together. Work-clothes and socks hang like garlands between the tent poles. The men, migratory laborers of all kinds—old and young, tall and short, all in working clothes—are scattered about: some reading newspapers on their bunks; some playing dice; others smoking as they listen to a singer with a banjo.)

**Fat Hines** (playing and singing):  
Things are dull in San Francisco,  
On the bum in New Orleans,  
Rawther punk in cultured Boston  
Famed for codfish, pork, and beans;  
On the hog in Kansas City,  
Out in Denver things are jarred—

**Boxcar Joe** (shouting over from the dice game): Aw, pipe down. What you think this is, Brother Tom's mission?

**Men**: Go to hell! Shut up yourself, go on, Fat; keep it up.

**Fat Hines**:  
And they're beefing in Chicago  
That the times are kinda hard;  
There's a howl from Cincinnati,  
New York City, Brooklyn too;  
In Milwaukee's foamy limits  
There is little work to do—

**Paddy Hughes** (a grizzled, droop-mustached Irishman): God, aint it the truth?

**Fat Hines**:  
In the face of all such rumors,  
It seems not amiss to say  
That no matter where you're going  
You just better stay away.  
(The men laugh.)

**Men**: More truth than poetry in that. Can you sing Ballicky Bill the Sailor, Fat? (Again, a laugh.)

**Shorty** (small, noisy, somewhat of a clown, shaking the dice): Is all the children got shoes? Is the rent paid? Is you sitting perty with the butcher and the grocer? (he rolls the dice, shouts): Do your stuff, dice. Rob him, dice, rob him.

(A shout arises from the men. Shorty picks up several bills from the floor, kisses them, and cuts capers while the men good-naturedly jeer at him.)

**Shorty**: Oh, you sweet mama. Come to your little papa, honey. Um-ph, um-ph. (he drops a bill). Come on Joe, fade me! fade me!

**Boxcar Joe**: Fade you? Say, even if I was Rockefeller, you aint no orphan asylum. (a general laugh)

**Shorty** (impatiently shaking the dice): Well, then, who's next? Come on, you guys, Warts? Blacky? Come on, Fat! Ah, there's Paddy Hughes, the king of the muckers, the human steam shovel! Paddy? No—no? Where's Steamboat? (looking for him, shouting) Hey, Steamboat, where are you? Wake up, this is New Orleans, end of the line, all out! (again to the men about him) Aint nobody going to fade me—nobody?

**Men**: What you take me for, a sucker? What you think we're doing for you: taking up a collection? Why don't you try robbing a bank, Shorty? You get it quicker that way.

**Shorty**: did you ever see such a bunch of pikers? I asks you. Pikers, that's what you is: that won't even give a poor hard-working stiff a chance to make a stake. (the men jeer.... Shorty leaps on a cot, a barker)

Line up to the right, men. See the international African Golf champeen roll his world famous sixes. Here you is. This way, gents. One dollar, two dollars, five dollars, ten dollars: he rolls 'em once, he rolls 'em twice, them world famous sixes. Line up, gents. It's your last chance. Going—going— (getting no response but laughter, he becomes angry)

Hell, there aint a sport in the whole god-damn pack of you. Satchel stiffes, that's what you is. (he spits in profound contempt)

Fft! Satchel stiffes! I been a plug thirty years and I aint never owned a satchel.

**Men** (jeering at him): You don't need one in jail, Shorty.

What you need a satchel for, with them dice?

You're so used to rolling an Irish buggy, you wouldn't know how to hold a satchel.

**Shorty** (shouting above the clamor): You're afraid, that's the trouble with you. And you're going to be sorry, too. As soon as them new engines is rigged up, you're going to get the can. Mind what I'm telling you. Couple of weeks from now you'll all be shuffling up and down Towne Avenue wishing you had two bits in your pants to roll the bones with.

**Men** (derisively): Who told you that, Shorty? Bolshevik Slim? You been listening to Slim's hooey? Don't you know that guy's bughouse? (others pick it up)

Where's Slim hiding out tonight? Aint we going to get the usual bedtime spiel on—on—what the hell's he call it?

He and the Kid and Steamboat's digging that rain ditch.

Go on! He's down the canyon somewhere getting tanked up.

**Boxcar Joe** (broad sarcasm): Sure, all them guys with the high-power brains, it takes a couple of pints to get 'em started. Look at Shorty now: he's damn near as smart as Bolshevik Slim himself. With a quart of whiskey in him, Shorty—Christ! Shorty makes Henry Ford look like the last pain in the birth of a nation. (They howl with laughter)

**Shorty**: Yah, you're a wise guy, aint you? You're just jealous of Slim, that's all. When he's around you got to hold your trap. Otherwise he shows you up for the sap you is, that's what. You—hell, you aint got no brains. You're nothing but a boxcar bum, see? If you had something in your nut besides—

(Boxcar Joe rises from his bunk and approaches the cringing Shorty with menace. Boxcar Joe clutches his shirtfront with one hand, and with the other starts a swinging blow that threatens to demolish Shorty. All crowd to see.)

**Shorty** (at once a ludicrous, deflated figure): Aw, I aint said nothing, Joe. Oh, n-no; don't do that, Joe. I aint said nothing, so help me God. (appealing to the men) Did I now? (they laugh at him)

**Boxcar Joe**: I aint nothing but a bum, huh? I aint got no brains, huh?

**Shorty**: I didn't mean you aint got no brains.

**Boxcar Joe**: No?

**Shorty** (the acme of innocence): No.

**Boxcar Joe**: What did you mean?

**Shorty** (stammering): I—I mean—there aint none of us that's so smart: that's all. (with surer ground under foot) And that's the God's truth, aint it? Otherwise we wouldn't be mucking out here in this crummy camp working like niggers for a lousy three-fifty a day, eating grub a respectable garbage can wouldn't have nothing to do with. If we was smarter, we wouldn't be bums. And that's all we is, I don't care what you say.

(Boxcar Joe releases him.)

**Men** (with healthy derision): Aw, dry up.

The hell you say!

**Shorty**: What's us guys getting out of life? I asks you. When you makes your stake, what you goes out and blows it on? Booze and women.

**Men**: What you expect? Rolls-Royces and twin beds?

Aw, go to bed; you're asleep on your feet.

Jesus, don't he sound just like a carbon copy of Slim?

They'll never make you pusher of a gang if you run around with Slim, Shorty. The boss's got him spotted.

**Shorty**: Sure, they got him spotted. They're afraid of him. (general hilarity.) Slim uses his nut, that's why. He thinks, that's what. If we listened to him we'd be joining a union, getting more money, telling Ragan where to get off at—(the tent rocks with laughter) You ought to hear that guy give figures.

**Men**: What for, his income tax? (this scores)



Drawn by William Gropper

## UNEMPLOYED

What good's his brains done him? I don't see where he's nothing but a mucker himself.

*Shorty (stumped for a moment):* Aw . . . I'm only wasting my breath on you. (a cry: "Got anything expensive on it, Shorty?")

I know what you think. Shorty, he's nothing but a god-damn fool. Shorty, he's just something to laugh at. Well, I aint been a working stiff for thirty years for nothing. There's hard times ahead of the working plug: you wait and see. They'll be through with us in that tunnel soon; and then you can all start taking your belts in. Try and find another job; just go down on Towne Avenue and try. (dramatically) Aint I seen it: soup lines a mile long; plugs crowding the slave markets so thick with a hungry look—Christ! you'd think it was the Republican convention. But you don't see none of that in the newspapers: naw. Coolidge prosperity. Bigger and slicker millionaires. To hell with the working man. (waving his arms, shouting) You better start boiling up, you stiffs. Start rolling up your bindles. It aint going to be long now. Back to the jungles and the rods with you; back to mooching on the main stem. Sure, you can laugh at Shorty now. But when they hand you your time, then what you going to do?

*Fat Hines (bursting into song):*

We'll go riding on the railroad,  
All livelong day,  
We'll go riding on the railroad,  
Just to pass the time away . . . . .

(Whistles, laughs, jeers, hoots, catcalls.)

(Slim comes in, wet, with a strained look on his face. He marches to his bunk, tosses off his slicker, and begins to pile his belongings together.)

*Boxcar Joe:* Ah, there he is, the big man himself. Bolshevik Slim in person!

*Men:* Get out the microphone, boys, he's going to broadcast.

Where you been hiding out on us tonight, Slim?

We can't hit the hay without our bedtime story on—what the hell—? oh, yes, economics!

Come on, Slim; give us one of them good old Bughouse Square soap-box spiels.

(several together)

Speech! Speech!

(Slim, having collected his possessions on the bed, stands staring at them, lost in thought.)

*Men (after watching him a moment in expectant silence):*

Sh! He's just coming out of the gas.

Pipe down, you guys. He's going to think. (the last word in derision:)

My Gawd!

*Boxcar Joe (clapping a pillow endwise on Slim's head, so that it sits awry like a dragoon's helmet):* Trotsky's right hand man; the white hope of red Russia: he wins the prize for beauty and brains.

(The men roar. Slim wearily knocks the pillow off his head.)

*Shorty (abashed by the ridicule heaped on his source of wisdom):* Go on, tell 'em, Slim. Tell 'em the way you told me. You can make 'em believe it too.

(Slim waves him aside. He lifts down a suit of underwear from one of the lines. As he returns to his cot, Boxcar Joe trips him. This launches the men into a new uproar.)

*Men:* Whoops! hold it, Slim!

Look out, he's sliding for the home-plate.

Down with capitalism!

Hurrah for Trotsky!

*Slim (picking himself up and eyeing them coolly):* You god-damn fools!

*Boxcar Joe (with a tough swagger):* Say, who you talking to? Who the hell you think you are? You aint no Jesus Christ. You're nothing but a big bag of wind, see? You can't even hold down a plain mucking job. Gassing around like you was something special, huh? Too good to associate with the rest of us, huh? We aint nothing but boobs, huh?—Towne Avenue bums. Brains—brains, my eye! Every man in camp knows you're nothing but a bolshevik nut, a cheap labor fakir. Who you calling a fool, anyhow?

*Slim (turning to the crowd that has gathered about them):* Listen to me, fellows—

*Boxcar Joe:* You're drunk. Go and douse your head in a bucket of water. And when you come back, keep your trap tight and go to bed.

*Slim (roaring at him):* Shut up! (a silence falls over the group; quickly:) Listen, fellas, you've all just been canned—all except him.

*Boxcar Joe:* You son of a—

*Men (holding him):* None of that, Joe.

Now wait a minute, Joe.

*Paddy Hughes (to Slim):* That's a lie.

*Slim:* It's the God's truth.

*Fat Hines:* Slim, we're going to knock hell out of you if you're lying.

*Slim:* In five minutes you'll see.

*Blacky:* How do you know?

*Slim:* They just canned me; me and the Kid and Steamboat. Menzies done it when we was through with the ditch.

*Warts:* Well, that's you; and you aint us.

*Slim:* The time-keeper told me the rest. You might as well start rolling up your bindles, boys. You're all going bye-bye.

*Shorty:* Tonight?

*Slim:* Every mucker in Menzies' gang.

*Fat Hines:* Jesus God!

*Slim:* They're cutting down on expense, he said.

*Paddy Hughes:* The dirty bastards!

**MARCH, 1929**



*Drawn by William Gropper*

**UNEMPLOYED**

*Slim*: What's a dozen muckers more or less?

*Blacky*: They wouldn't send a mule out on a night like this.

*Slim*: All except Boxcar Joe.

*Boxcar Joe*: There aint a word of truth in it.

*Slim*: Joe, he's going to stay. A mucker's a mucker, but Joe: ah, Joe, he's a friend of the boss.

*Boxcar Joe*: Don't you see he's drunk?

*Slim*: Boxcar Joe, they need him. The boss 's got to know what's going on in the bunkhouse, don't he? He's got to know what the men 're talking about when they 're off the shift, don't he? Maybe there's somebody telling 'em the boss aint God. Maybe there's somebody telling 'em a working stiff ought to stand up on his hind legs like he was human and have some guts and ask what's coming to him. And that—ah, that aint patriotic. Sure, the boss 's got to know all that. And Boxcar Joe, he aint just a plain mucker. There's lots of things he's useful for.

*Boxcar Joe*: He's just plain bughouse. He's raving, don't you see?

*Men (swarming around Slim, tortured with doubt)*:

I don't believe it.

Slim, for Christ's sake, tell us the truth.

Aw, bust him in the jaw.

That's just some more of that propaganda of his.

He aint nothing but an agitator. *(they threaten him.)*

Knock him down! Sock him one! *(they press against him with upraised fists)*

*Slim (lifting his arms, shouting above the clamor)*: There's Steamboat. Look, look the way he's hugging his shovel! Ask him.

*(Steamboat, gloomy, carrying his shovel strangely under his arm, has just entered, followed by The Kid. The men all flock about them.)*

*Men*: Steamboat, it aint true, is it?

Did he can you, Steamboat?

*Steamboat (flinging his shovel down, surly)*: Go away from me.

*The Kid (sighing)*: Yep. We both got it in the neck.

*Men*: What about us? What about us?

*Steamboat*: You think you're better 'n me?

*Paddy Hughes*: Then it's true. By God, it's true.

*(A silence falls over them.)*

*Steamboat (in grim rage)*: I work for this company for eight years—eight years! I muck for 'em twelve hours a day in the desert, when you couldn't hardly breathe with the heat. Yesterday I feed six hundred sacks of cement in the mixer. Ragan, he come and says: "Get the hell away from here. You're no damn good. You're too slow." *(rumbling with bitterness)*. Too slow, he says! Too slow!

*Men (slowly beginning to realize their plight)*:

Jesus, jobs are hard to get.

It's hard times now.

This is all the doings of that little snipe, Menzies, I bet.

God, wouldn't I like to bloody up his nose!

*Slim (singing quietly)*: Hallelujah, I'm a bum,

Hallelujah, bum again—

*The Kid*: Here they come. Here's Ragan and Menzies now.

*(Ragan, chewing his cigar, is followed by Menzies, both wet from the rain. They walk into the midst of a silent crowd.)*

*Ragan (looking around)*: Hello, men.

*A few Men (sheepishly)*: Good evening, Mr. Ragan.

*Warts (a little, sniffing, obsequious fellow)*: Won't you sit down, Mr. Ragan?

*Ragan (to Menzies, pointing to the side of the tent)*: See there, the way the wind 's pulled them stakes up? Have 'em all fastened down good tomorrow. *(Menzies nods, somewhat frightened)*.....

*Warts (obsequiously)*: Yeh, the rain 's been coming in on my bunk. Kinda wet outside, aint it?

*Ragan (taking the cigar out of his mouth)*: We got orders to cut down on men. We'll have to let some of you fellas go. *(A dead silence.)*

*Blacky*: How many?

*Ragan (cool)*: All of you. The time-keeper 'll pay you off. He's in his tent. *(to Boxcar Joe)* I want to see you in my tent, Joe. *(he starts out amid a silence)*

*Steamboat (intercepting him)*: I work for this company for eight years.

*Ragan (looking him over)*: That don't make you a good workman.

*Steamboat*: For eight years—nobody can me before—

*Ragan (imperturbable)*: That aint a sign you shouldn'ta been.

*Steamboat (trying with fearful strength to control his rage)*: All summer long I work twelve hours a day in the desert—

*Ragan*: What do you expect? a pension? *(he turns to go)*

*Blacky*: Wait a minute. You aint asking us to clear out tonight?

*Ragan*: What you waiting for? thirty days notice?

*Blacky*: It's raining, aint it?

*Shorty*: It's sixty miles to town.

*Menzies*: It aint raining hard.

*Ragan (after thinking it over deliberately)*: I guess you better let 'em stay tonight, Menzies.

*Menzies*: But Mr. Ragan, them new riggers—

*Ragan*: Well . . . . you better let 'em stay tonight.

*Slim (grandiose jeering)*: Aint that generous! He's going to let us stay another night, boys. He's going to let his crums bite us another night, and the rain drop in through the holes in the tent to splash in our eyes. *(like a mother to her child)*. What do you say to the kind man?

*Ragan*: That don't mean you. I want you to get the hell out of here—damn quick.

*Slim (grinning at the men)*: Watch him give me the bum's rush, boys.

*Ragan*: I know all about you.

*Slim*: Yeh: you been getting daily reports, aint you? Been worrying about 'em, too huh? There aint nothing like having a private personal newspaper working for you, is there, Ragan? *(he looks at Boxcar Joe.)*

*Ragan*: If the American Legion fellas down at Saugus got hold of a trouble-maker like you—

*Slim*: They'd have a real old-fashioned American neck-tie party, wouldn't they?

*Ragan (eyeing him steadily)*: If you don't want to get inside that neck-tie, you better be out of this camp in five minutes.

*Slim*: Boys, there's nothing like having a good old friend to give you a brotherly warning.

*Ragan (after a long moment of measuring Slim with his eyes, he turns slowly on his heel)*: Come on, Menzies.

*Steamboat (who has been brooding all this time, now steps before him with a malevolent eye)*: I work for this company for eight years—

*Ragan*: Listen to me—

*Steamboat (bellowing, his whole body shaking)*: Before you come—

*Ragan (in his penetrating tone of command)*: I don't give a damn what was before I come. You're canned now. That's all I got to say to you.

*(As he turns to go, Steamboat leaps at him; and with one quick terrific blow knocks him unconscious on the ground. A gasp goes up from the men.)*

*Menzies (terrified)*: My God! You— Mr. Ragan!

*Steamboat (insane with rage)*: Come here. You, I fix you now.

*Menzies (retreating in terror, stumbling)*: N-no, no! Stop him! *(shrieking)* Help me, for Christ's sake. Don't let him—

*(He backs into Steamboat's shovel, and swings it menacingly over his head.)*

*Menzies (quavering)*: I'll brain you if you come any closer. So help me God, I'll brain you. Stop where you are—oh, Jesus!

*(Steamboat rips the shovel from his hands, and starts strangling the life out of him. Menzies chokes and splutters. Slim, the Kid, and Shorty tear Steamboat from his victim. Steamboat is in a frenzy; he roars with impotent rage.)*

*Steamboat (incoherent, between pants)*: Let me go. For eight years—I I smash his mug in, like jam. Me, Steamboat, I do it—I'm strong like steel. I smash him flat like a poster.—He aint God, is he? I kill him—!

*(Slim subdues him. Menzies struggles to his feet and rubs his bruised throat.)*

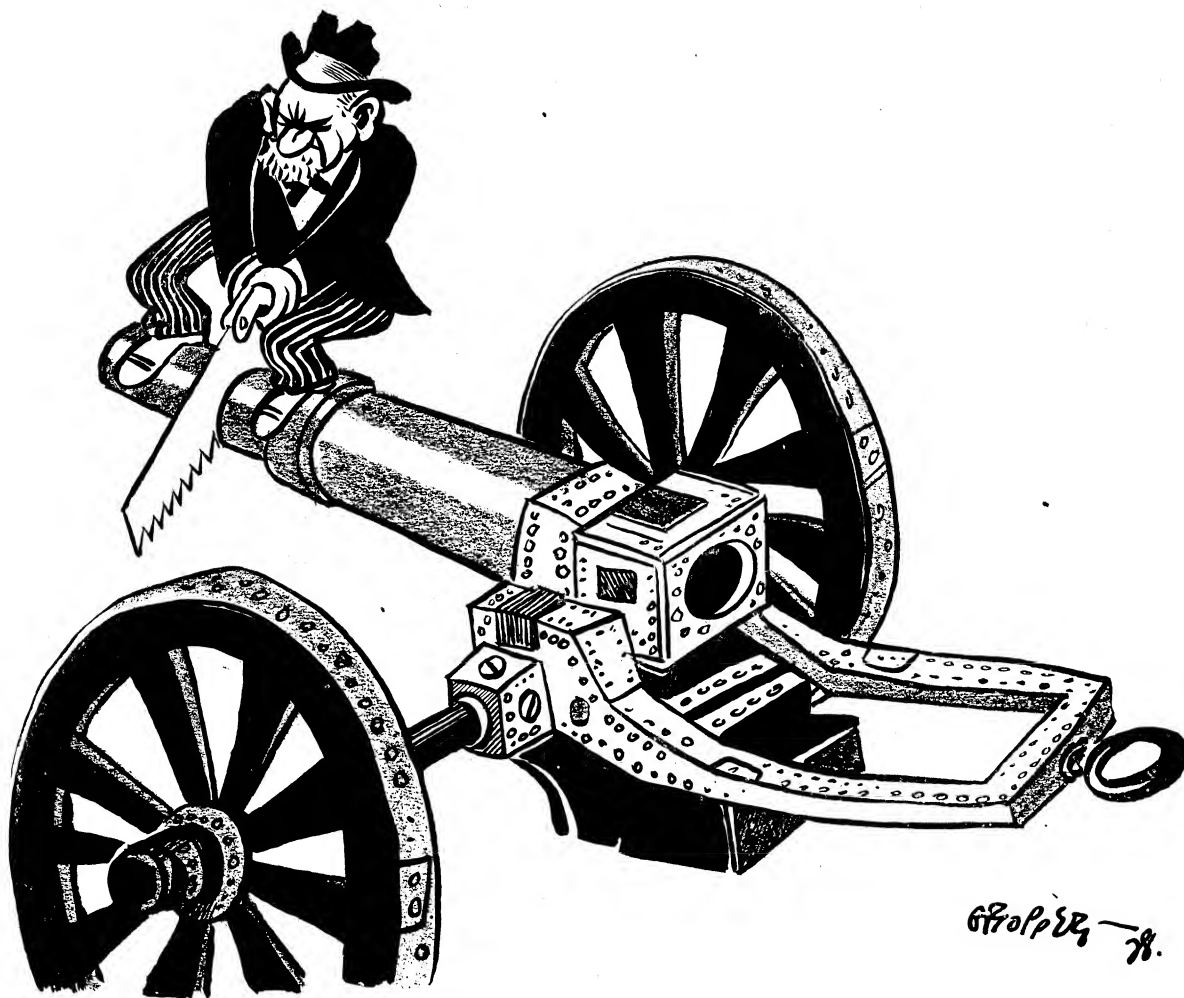
*Menzies (hoarse)*: Get out of here. Take him away. I'll call the Legion. I'll have him lynched . . . . *(he backs away)*

*Slim (quietly)*: You done enough, Steamboat. Hold yourself in; save it. This is just the beginning. *(he takes one of Steamboat's arms, and nods to The Kid, who follows suit)*

Come on, Kid.

*(The light fades out.)*





DISARMAMENT

# POEMS — By HERMAN SPECTOR

## OUTCAST

*I am the bastard in the ragged suit  
who spits, with bitterness and malice to all.*

*needing the stimulus of crowds,  
hatred engendered of coney-island faces  
pimps in a pressedwell parade.*

*I, looking into faces  
(some say nothing; or with a leer—  
see what the years have done to me,  
and be confused,  
unbroadway heel!)*

*at times the timid christ,  
longing to speak . . .  
women pass hurriedly, disdainfully by.  
men, pignouted, puff  
and puke at the stars . . .*

*recalling the verses of sensitive men  
who have felt these things . . .  
who have reacted, to all things on earth, .  
I am dissolved in unemotion.  
won by a quiet content,  
the philosophy of social man . . .  
The high hat gods go down the aisles  
I am at one with life.*

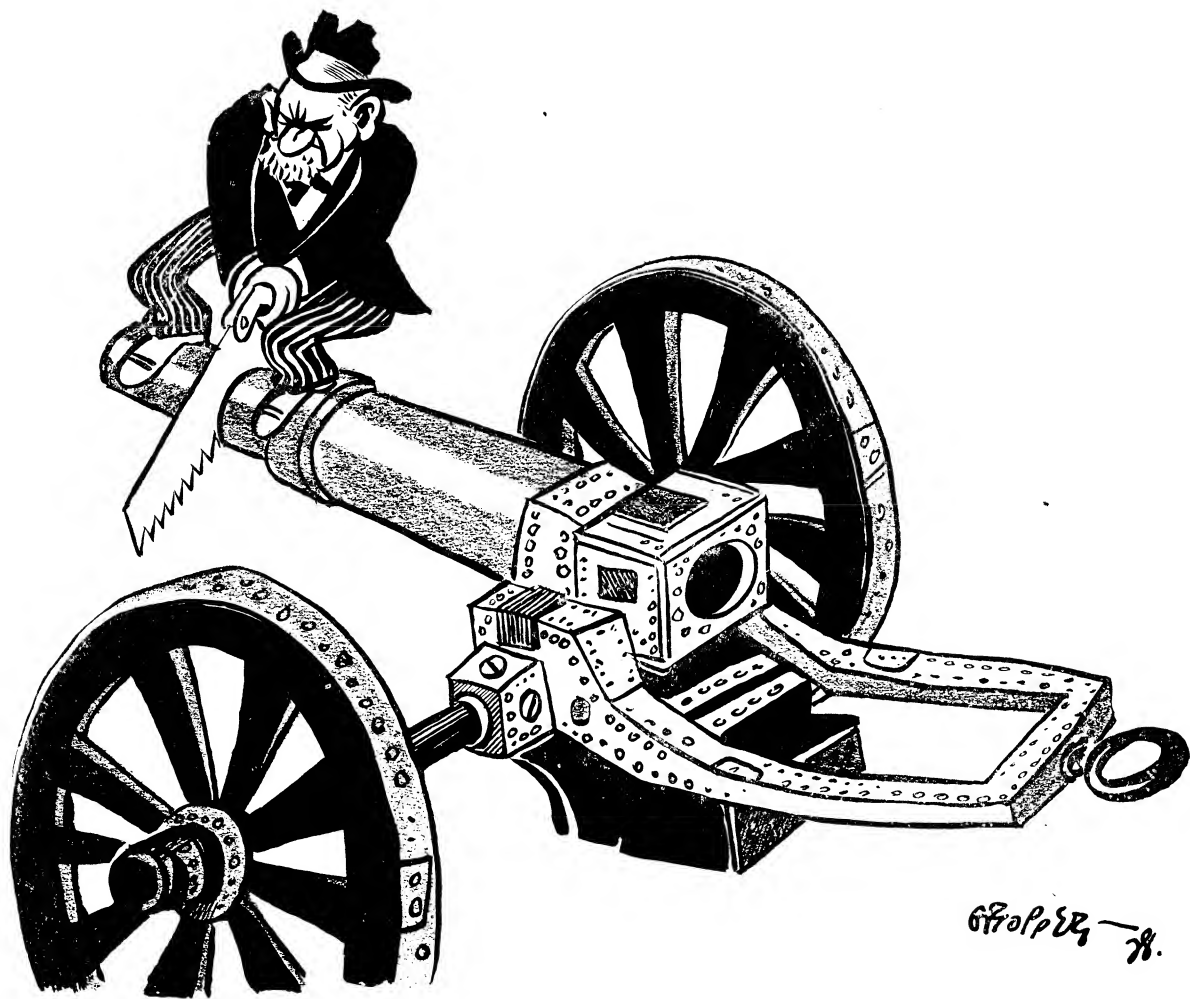
## URBANITE DELAPIDATE

*friend, you are wearied.  
as from no knowledges of death,  
nor with ennui . . .  
but sitting, never more than whistling things,  
your face is softly tragic now; you seem  
to have a certain solemn majesty  
amid the glare of steel, whitepaint,  
and passengers asquirm.*

*whence comes this sudden evening sadness, peace?  
what brings the frightful frown to be forgot?  
the venomed lust, now hidden, and a sheet  
of unread morning paper on your lap . . .  
your nodding head.  
ah, you are tired.  
wearied, not of life  
nor from wise knowledges of death . . .*

*but the damn misery of flesh  
awaiting loveliness:  
the stark and neverfelt caress  
of softness like the night*

*not knowledges of death.  
nor consciousness of things forgot.  
but simply, longings: tortured lusts,  
that makes this business vulture's head to swim . . .  
and gives him such a majesty  
in sleep.*



DISARMAMENT



## KRAVCHENKO — SOVIET ARTIST

People running, falling, shouting, shooting. Barrels, signs, wheels are thrown pell-mell upon uprooted pavement stones, bespattered with the blood of the dead. This is street fighting. With all its noise, excitement and frenzy of despair. Nature and people are united in a mixup of rain and smoke that is surrounding the whole barricade.

There are different things made by Kravchenko; illustrations for romantic stories by Hoffman and Gogol. The subjects vary, but thruout all of them there is the same exciting play of dark and light, the same pointed crispness of line, that reveals suddenly the hidden beauty of common things. Yet in all his work, no matter how grotesque the subject might be, there is no trace of degeneracy of any kind. They are energetic and full of life.

Alexey Kravchenko comes from a peasant family, a fact significant in itself. His parents intended him to become a clergyman. Fortunately, he had his way, and eventually became a student of the Moscow School of Art. He studied under distinguished men both in Russia and abroad. In 1914 the Petersburg Academy sent him to India, where he made several large paintings. He participated in the war, and during the revolution was appointed an instructor of art and curator of the newly created museum of Saratov.

It was only in 1921, that he became interested in wood engraving. Before the war wood engraving in Russia was a lost art. As war turned into revolution, oil-colors, canvas, even good paper became scarser all the time. Naturally the artists turned to something that could be done in a small size on a block of wood or linoleum, and could stand a cheap and effective reproduction. A whole school sprung in existence. A line of fine artists like Favoriskij, Masiutin, Falileev, Pavlinov and others, were busy making endless illustrations, book-covers, posters etc.. But among them Kravchenko is, perhaps, the most significant figure. He is the type of a modern Russian artist-illustrator, who combines the rare insight and romantic aproach towards things, that he inherited from an older generation of artists, with the healthy and robust spirit, which can be only the result of a great social change.

WILLIAM SIEGEL

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By John Addington

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### THE REVOLT OF THE ANGELS

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# BOOKS

## REVIEWED BY:

Em Jo Basshe

Stanley Burnshaw

Walter Barber

John Dos Passos

Herman Spector

Grace Burnham

Henry Flury

Michael Gold

William Pickens

Benjamin C. Marsh

*Shifting Scenes*, by Hallie Flanagan. Coward-McCann, New York. \$3.50.

It is interesting to note that although science has spent a great deal of its energy and time in defining and redefining sexual love it has never, so far as I know—and I am a sorry authority on this matter—put its nose to examining the purer and simpler manifestations of love; I mean the love of people for baseball, orange blossoms, lace counterpanes and the other gymcracks that have made this world a bonded warehouse; not the love that the curious, the hoopskirt wearers and the possessors of newspaper cards have for this or that game. They will look through the crack of any fence until they see something of the game which they profess to “love” and then rah-rah themselves hoarse in the hope that they’ll convince others of their genuine motives. These sports come as a matter of course. They will not climb the fence for fear of tearing their trousers or their step-ins and at the first approach of a row of brass buttons on a blue background will slink away to a safe haven.

Hallie Flanagan, of Vassar College, has an over-the-fence love for the theatre. Tucked away in Poughkeepsie, she directs their little theatre and leads the doubtful virgins of that immaculate institution through the mazes of stage production, dramatic art and chooses her plays without benefit of the thick and soupy catalogues. Having received a Fellowship from the Guggenheim Foundation, she betook herself to the theatre of Europe and seeing the panorama of that wide stage before her, presents it to us now with such swift and changing variety that one feels that this is not a book at all, in spite of the impressive cover and print, but simply a succession of lights, shadows, personalities, and stage braces as she meant it to be when she called it “*Shifting Scenes*”. It would have been impossible for this to be so convincing if she had not climbed the fence and seen the whole shooting match with both her eyes and the other. And now we come to the point and the point is this: the Warehouse is full of false lovers and there is no reason why the world should give them an even break anymore. If this sounds like a moral fit for the wall of a “God bless our happy home” take it as such and keep the copyright to yourself.

If this were only a book about the theatre Miss Flanagan would deserve more than an even break and even more ballyhoo than her publisher might give her. But without leaving the theatre for one moment she has incorporated, perhaps unconsciously, charming and spirited travel sketches that lend color to the movement of the scenes.

The curtains part in London; but that conglomeration of frigid-ville villages is as important to the student of the theatre as a speech by Coolidge is to the student of history. Everything is the same here; play play: set set: theatre theatre, Exit. On to Erin. Now that the Black and Tan archbishops have left this green island, the theatre ought to blossom forth with the same freedom as the shamrock and so we are terribly disappointed to find Mr. Frank Fay, one of the directors of the Abbey Theatre, declaring that the stage has gone to the dogs entirely and since Senator Yeats has seen fit to reject Sean O’Casey’s latest play because of its advanced technique, there is little here to describe or speculate upon. But an Ireland which can give birth to an O’Casey, a Synge, a Shaw and a Lady Gregory need not fear of becoming decadent.

But Oslo! Never forget Oslo! (It’s in Norway); that is, never forget that Oslo is Ibsen, and that his ghost is still chalking up the stage boards for Nora to place her defiant feet upon. But it seems that the whole stage has been chalked up by the great Henrik and there is no room left for a new pen or foot and Oslo doesn’t seem to care, for “It is linked with the past” and there is so much surcease in the past, oh, so much!

Sweden is closer to the present. Strindberg pulled down the blinds only yesterday and they have not as yet had a chance to recover from the blow that he landed on the cold and harmless literature and theatre of that country. He taught them a lesson which they are unwilling or too clever to forget. Therefore the theatre there is glowing somehow . . . which is something.

No book on the theatre is quite complete without Gordon Craig. No critic dares to forget him. Rightly so. For that is as far as that great artist will ever get . . . Napoleon without his butcher knife . . . Craig without his drawing pencil . . . Napoleon sans his “empire” . . . Craig sans his theatre . . . both exiled by England. Here once more Craig pours out his great passion for the theatre and then negates everything with his country gentleman philosophy . . . what an anomaly . . . what a superb flower lost in a wilderness.

Italy boasts of a Bragaglia . . . a fine and sensitive director and stops there. Mussolini’s “Roman Empire” has revived the use of castor oil but has left the theatre to wait . . . since the Fascist druggist cannot write plays or direct a theatre . . . no one else has a right to and so their theatre is cold pudding . . . as if anybody cares.

Germany, Riga, Vienna, Prague, Budapest . . . the old and the new bowing to each other . . . gracefully, meaningly and otherwise . . . the warm lips of today kissing the cold hand of yesterday . . . things do sprout here and there . . . a playwright here . . . a director there . . . Piscator in Berlin, Piteoff in Paris, Gamza in Prague . . . and others . . . a new contraption on Friday . . . a novel idea on Tuesday . . . and yet in spite of its meagerness it is important because it shows that the people are not stagnant; but there is nothing sweeping here . . . nothing grand . . . nothing revolutionary . . . nothing to give up your five fruits and synthetic gin for and dash away to learn . . . to applaud . . . until:

Miss Flanagan buttons her coat and sets her feet on Russian soil. And they cling to it as if they were akin to it . . . as if they belonged there. The “Red Theatre” . . . spirit, vitality, “faith and wonder” . . . it is impossible to read the brilliant chapters unemotionally . . . you are overwhelmed by the ideas, theories, on music, scenery, acting, life, bio-mechanics, gymnastics, style, opera . . . new words . . . old words but each one with a different meaning. *Theatre* here is not a building . . . not a real estate venture for a retired manager of a Madison Square Garden pugilist . . . not a combination of outworn tricks and idiotic traditions . . . it is an art and an art that springs from the people and caters to the people . . . it is an art that astounds the uninitiated and jars the oversensitive . . . and yet all this in a country where theorists are speculating on the intrinsic value of art in general . . . and while this theorizing goes on they keep on creating and the world and his wife are treading the weary way to watch and wonder and applaud.

EM JO BASSHE.

# THE LOVES OF ISADORA

By MICHAEL GOLD

Isadora Duncan was a genius.

That word has been so cheapened by hacks it has no meaning left. But it can be applied to Isadora.

She destroyed the Ballet. She restored the Dance. Her work marks a new epoch. Her work is permanent.

She set humanity free in a new and important way.

2.

Among savages the dance was a sacred art. In "our" civilization it became a sex perversion, and a form of ostentatious waste.

The dance is probably older than speech. It is the poetry of materialism. Animals dance. It is their mating speech.

Among our hairy savage fathers, the dance was the speech of philosophy.

The dance was man's first comment on earth, fire, air, love, sun, plant—the world.

There are sacred dances thousands of years old. Their emotions are as exactly organized as science.

3.

Under "Christianity", the primitive dance split into two streams.

One was the folk dance, the mass joy of the people.

The other was the Ballet, fungus of the courts.

The ballet expressed the sterile formalism of the courtiers, their parasitism, their cheap, useless elegance.

The ballet ruled Europe for two centuries. It had no rivals, and seemed secure as the European thrones.

Generations of flunkey art critics chanted its praise. Its stupid acrobatic stunts were worshipped as if they meant something. No one dared attack the ballet in the art world. This would have been Bolshevism.

No one had any alternative to suggest. The dance instinct had become atrophied.

4.

Isadora Duncan, a little Irish-American girl born of a poor musician's family in San Francisco, arose like David.

She toppled the giant fake to the ground. She was a new primitive. She discovered the motor of the savage dance. She created a new dance. She was a genius.

She did what Walt Whitman had done for poetry. She ripped off all the corsets. She let herself go. She denied the rights of private property in the dance. She made it free for everyone. She rushed into the sunlight. She laughed at the technical acrobats. She sneered at their mindless, soulless dancing.

Her dancing was not a stunt, but her philosophy of life.

She inspired others. Hundreds of new dancers have followed in her trail. Dancing has mystery in it again, and belief.

The court ballet now seems as futile and old-fashioned as a hoopskirt.

5.

This should have been enough for Isadora. Walt Whitman was satisfied with one career. But Isadora entered upon a second career.

Love!

In her book, "My Life," (Horace Liveright, publisher,) Isadora never spells Love without a capital letter.

O Love! Love again! Her book is one of the great autobiographies. Isadora was as direct as a man. She tells about her dozens of lovers, the famous and the infamous.

Among the famous ones were D'Annunzio, the operatic tenor, antique collector and world-known thesaurus.



Another was her last, Sergy Yessenin, a mad, gifted young Soviet poet who hung himself in exhaustion.

Isadora describes her men lovingly. She holds no grudges. This is not a book like the ones Casanova and Frank Harris used to write in idler days. Isadora does not crow and ask you to admire her prowess. She is not defiant or Luciferian.

She is like a mother who has had 22 children, and has loved each in turn.

Isadora is charming. She suffers through the 22nd accouchment as romantically as she did during the first. This is a gift.

6.

The old sex standard, based on private property, is breaking down in this revolutionary day.

The penalties have been lessened, and everyone has begun to practise Love.

Bernard MacFadden has made it popular in the tabloids, and Margaret Sanger now offers it as a cure for poverty and war.

V. F. Calverton, an authority, has made a statistical survey of the rubber goods counters in Baltimore drug stores. He declares almost the entire population of Baltimore has been converted to the philosophy of Life and Love.

Love is respectable now. Businessmen come to Greenwich Village on pilgrimage, and drink at the many fountains of Love. Congressmen mention it in speeches, and the President of a Bank recently admitted to a reporter he

had read a book on Love.

There is no doubt of it: Ping-Pong and Love are the two most popular indoor occupations in America today.

The movement has triumphed! And Isadora Duncan was the Joan of Arc of this mighty movement! Her sacrifice was enormous! She suffered, and suffered, and suffered—Christ, how she suffered!

7.

She was a genius, and a wonderful woman. But it is difficult to accept her prayerful approach to sex. She sounds too much like the novels of Laura Jean Libbey. I wonder, does every woman feel that way about Love?

Sometimes I suspect Isadora is the first woman who has written down what every woman actually feels about Love.

If this is true, the future is a black one for males. The day will come when the human female will devour the male in the moment of Love, exactly like a female spider or locust.

8.

Sex will become free as air. This will be good. No one will have to think about it anymore. No one will pray to it, or feel noble or degraded over it.

Sex is the mechanical means by which life is continued. Lobsters and buzzards, equally with man, use this mechanism.

It is not intrinsically sacred, except in the sense that all life is sacred.

What has given it its mysticism, its poetry, its romantic beauty, is the human mind.

When sex is free, friendship will assume its rightful importance.

And the social instinct will be found as fiercely romantic as the sex instinct seems today to repressed Americans.

The human mind can do all this.

It should. Sex has become a sort of bourgeois opium. It is a form of escape.

When sex is free, men and women may become friends. They



are not friends at present, they are enemies and lovers.

9.

Poor Isadora! Her life held tragedies. But it was a crowded and glorious life, and one worth living.

All of us must suffer and die. This is not too tragic. What is tragic is that so many millions suffer and die in a gray fog of futility.

Isadora, with her splendid flamboyance, made speeches at her dance-concerts.

"Yes, I am a Red," she said once, "and I am proud to be one, because most people are Gray."

She was a Red, but not a real revolutionist. It was all emotion with her, glorious and erratic.

She was a genius of the transition period between two worlds, a forerunner, like Walt Whitman.

She prophesied the future, when in a free society there will be neither money nor classes, and men will seem like gods, when the body and mind will form a radiant unity.

Her own mind and body approached that unity. But she was the product of an environment, and never shook it off.

She sensed the future, but she would have been unhappy if forced to live in that future.

With all her beautiful Platonic theories, in actual life she was spoiled like most stage prima donnas.

Some intimate followers and friends have written two books recently about Isadora.\* The books are an anti-climax. They are like reports of a valet who reveals his master's secrets.

Irma Duncan whines and whines. She whines about Soviet Russia, and Isadora's hardships there.

She never lets one know for a second that 140 million people were suffering more extreme hardships during the time. Thousands of them even passed beyond the luxury of whining. They died.

Yes, little Irma complains that during the famine period Lenin and the Soviets had no time in which to provide Isadora with adulation, money and Parisian comforts.

This book should not have been written or published. It leaves a bad taste in the mouth.

Irma has not a word to say about workingclass Russia, and the great creation of a world. She is busy with gossip about crazy Bohemian artists, and nepmen who gave Isadora good things to eat, and sleek "cultured" Soviet bureaucrats, the ones that had not yet been caught.

Isadora gravitated to this kind of crowd all her life. It was not her fault, but the fault of her world.

She was a Californian, too, and at the end returned to the native blanket, and used a ouija board, Irma tells us.

Never mind. Hurrah, Isadora, you will never be forgotten! You had the courage and open-handedness of an old-time cowpuncher. You were a good sport. You were a genius.

You were a prima donna, too, but it was not your fault. You were born hundreds of years too soon, and in the wrong country.

\* *Isadora Duncan's Russian Days*, by Irma Duncan and Allan Ross Macdougall, Covici-Friede, N. Y. \$3.50.

\* *The Untold Story—Life of Isadora Duncan*, by Mari Desti, Horace Liveright, N. Y. \$3.50.

## BABY TALK

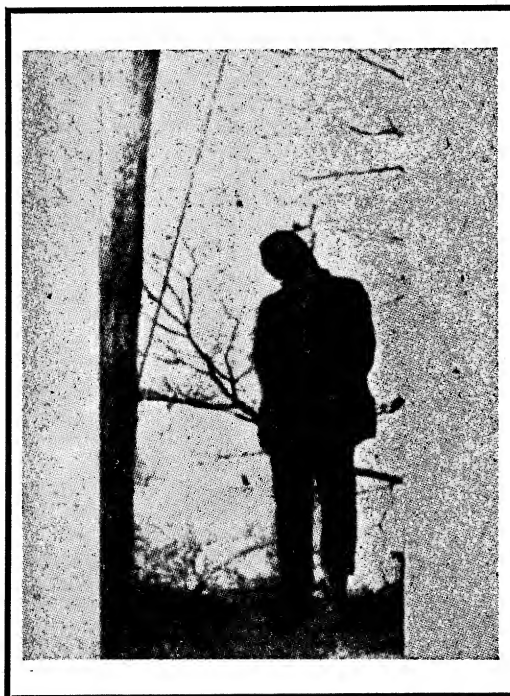
*Man, the Miracle Maker*, by Hendrik Van Loon. Liveright. \$3.50.

Mr. Van Loon, cartoonist and historian, has published, for no apparent reason, another one of his outlines in child language. This one is a not very profound "story" of inventions. Mr. Van Loon begins all the way back in prehistory and carries his record up to and including the latest Packard straight eight and Dunhill cigarette lighter. The subject is unquestionably well suited to Mr. Van Loon's calculated naive style, but I must be forgiven for being slightly tired of this baby talk to disguise very, very deep thoughts. The author also has a bad habit of getting sarcastic about things that require tears. However, the cartoons are pretty good.

G. B. S.

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## BUT IS IT BIOGRAPHY?

*The Discoverer: A new narrative of the life and hazardous adventures of the Genoese Christopher Columbus, by Andre De Hévesy; translated by Robert M. Coates. The Macaulay Company. \$3.00.*

The contemporary vogue of "biography," as its perpetrators would have us call it, has left almost no personage of any historical distinction at all, unviolated. And now poor Christopher Columbus, against whose name so many American immigrant-citizens have hurled a well-known curse, comes in for his share of martyrdom—at the hands of Andre de Hévesy, a hitherto undistinguished French litterateur whose present work can add no mite to his artistic stature.

Like many of our recent "biographies" *Christopher Columbus* hails from France; and the Well Wishers of Good English Literature might lodge a real claim against the French as the instigators of this biographobia which has been stacking up such stunning publishers' sales. The claim would be well founded—and any spiritless American habitué of the *Rotonde* or the *Dome* can tell you that Parisian bookstands daily creak beneath the weight of oncoming "biographies"—from a handful on John Gilbert to five and six on Maurice Chevalier, Clara Kimball Young, Dickens . . . And one is tempted to look very wise, blame it all on France's eternal obsession on "les moeurs," and throw up one's hands in despair . . .

But this would be too easily easing our consciences. Because France happens to put particular stress on social settings, manners, etcetera, is no justification for English and American publishers dumping on the market and blurring from the trade-journals, cargoes of alleged writing that is neither good literature nor good journalism! Nor does this justify the sales-promotional wizards of contemporary letters, panhandling encomia of praise whose hyperbolism is matched only by factual misstatements they proclaim.

It is time something honest were done about this current palming-off of pseudo-thinking and pseudo-reviewing. If our publishers wish to be known primarily as panderers to selling and thus class themselves artistically with the *Evening Journal* et al, then well and good . . . and all our suspicions are justified. But if they pretend to be the vehicles for sound thinking and writing—the channels of art—then something should be done—and done quickly.

For biography makes certain relentless demands of its ministers. It requires that above all else, they concern themselves with facts . . . facts of the personages to which they happen to dedicate themselves. Like all sound writers, the biographer must be artistically honest, but honesty with him be a guiding passion . . . to have it otherwise is to betray the trust of a reader. For biographers are morally obligated to account for every impression and even suggestion, from factual material. One might honestly say that pure biography is quintessence of research—that the purest form of biography is scientific chronology, just as mathematics is the purest form of philosophy . . . People come to admire their pet heroes for what they were; people want their heroes for what they are—and not for a snatch of fancy which may strike the biographer as pretty or even beautiful: to put forth fancy and offer it as fact, is simply to lie! So it is that the biographer is burdened with a trust that is required in no other branch of writing.

How many of these biographies have betrayed. How many of them are merely the bastard children of washed-out dilettantes. How few are the love children of solid minds. I call to mind two recent "biographies" of Shelley, both very financially successful, both often called in our literary coin, "masterpieces." What was the first but an astounding conceit by the talented late Elinor Wylie, and the other but a bag of suave journalistic tricks by Maurois. And I call to mind *Francois Villon* by D. B. Wyndham Lewis—not a "pure" biography but an excellent one, both scientifically honest and freighted with art. And then this poor pedestrian *Christopher Columbus*—not incorrect (as far as I can judge), nor dishonest, but lifted above mediocre drabness neither by its chronicle nor its art . . . A totally weak-blooded book remarkable for nothing but its dullness, physical bulk, and inadequate typography . . .

STANLEY BURNshaw.

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# THE MAKING OF A WRITER

By JOHN DOS PASSOS

*120 Million*, by Michael Gold, International Publishers. \$1.50.

Most writers whose work turns out later to be any good have to spend ten or fifteen years floundering about before they hit upon a method of saying what they want to say. Of course there are people in whom poetry bursts out in the first fire of puberty, and who suddenly attain a style of expression in early manhood like Keats and Shelley and Pushkin, but it's rare that they do much afterwards. Probably it's better that most of them die young. *120 Million* is a collection of rough sketches by the way, by a man who is being gradually forced to find a method by the pent up need to say what he has to say. In one or two of them he succeeds in saying it. Certainly "Faster America, Faster" is one of the best pieces of writing that has been printed in ten years.

As a writer Mike Gold is very lucky to have been born when he was and where he was. The New York East Side before the war was one of the most remarkable phenomena in history, a germ of an ancient eastern-european culture transplanted pure into the body of America the way a scientist would transplant a colony of bacilli for an experiment. To have been able to live from its beginning the growth of the heaven of Jewish culture in American life may not seem so important now, but from a vantagepoint of twenty-five years I think it will seem tremendously important. The amazing thing is that this rich loam has not yet produced a single American writer; it has produced isolated books like *Haunch Paunch and Jowl*, but no writing to compare in historic importance with the East Side's great world-sweeping invention, jazz.

*120 Million* is a clear graph of a writer's development. It starts with a straight first rate sketch called "Coal Breaker," the sort of thing the *New Masses* and the *Masses* have published again and again, the writing, that is in some way the writing I like best, that is called forth by the first impact of the real grim world on the sensitive fibres of someone who has just discovered the secret magnificent pleasure of release through the written word. Its not always the work of youngsters by any means, for even if a man writes his first work when he's sixty there's likely to be a certain adolescent freshness about it, a tender or joyful indignation that makes the sentences take fire.

It's the next step that is the worst. The young man sits on the edge of his bed one morning and decides that he's a writer, that he's going to be rich and famous, or poor and famous; and then he sits down to write, not to get something off his chest, but to make eyes at, that critics will damn or praise (it's much the same) in long columns of print. It seems to me that "God is Love" and the "Password to Thought—to Culture" were written in that mood. I don't know what's the matter with the "Two Mexicos", but I don't like it. It's only with the piece "On a Section Gang" that Mike Gold again hits his stride.

"On a Section Gang," "Love on a Garbage Dump," and "Faster, America, Faster" are the work of a man who knows his trade, who knows what he wants to say and how to say it. I can't praise them too highly. I think they are great stuff.

I said Mike Gold was lucky to have been born on the East Side. I think he was also lucky to have worked on a real garbage dump, instead of on the garbage dumps of dead ideas the colleges are, to have started life as a worker instead of as an unclassed bourgeois. A writer is after all only a machine for absorbing and arranging certain sequences of words out of the lives of the people round him. Great literature can only be grown out of the loam of a rich and sprouting popular life. American society is a sausage machine forever turning lively proletarians into bleached and helpless suburban business men. Mike Gold has the luck to get the nourishment for his writing from the meat before it has been fed into the hopper. Most of the other writers of our day are busily trying to find life and form in the grey gobs of mince-meat, afterwards.

*120 Million* is a pretty tall name, but as a promise, it's justified. All that's needed is for Mike Gold to go ahead and fulfill it. He's got the material and he's got a method of writing; the fact that he's a revolutionist assures him of contact with the liveliest and

most undigested elements of American life. The fact that he accepts the discipline of the Workers' Party gives him that inner peace and stability that comes from accepting any genuine discipline.

We know too little yet about the structure of the featherless bipeds to be able to say except in the vaguest way what it is that makes one man a tailor, another a carpenter, another a skillful exploiter of his tribe with the power of a hundred millions behind him, another a writer, a poet. The old idea of genius being a sort of spontaneous generation, the way they used to think worms came from slime, can I think be safely discarded. What I like best about *120 Million* is that it gives you a chance to see a poet developing before your eyes. Only it's just an inkling. Here's thirty years of raw history, the East Side growing up, Jewish life bursting the shell of its old ossified culture, bringing forth flowers in the rank soil of American slums; gangsters, song-writers, scientists,—and the helteriskelter lives of millions of Mexicans, Negroes, Bohunks, Wops, Hungarians, Albanians, Polacks building a continent out of their sweat . . . and a man with his roots in all that, moulding it with the passionate conviction of a revolutionist. How can he help giving us the hard tense poetry we need? As Mike Gold says in his preface, *Let us persist*.

*Swann's Way*, by Marcel Proust, Modern Library, Inc. \$0.95.

A good antidote for Snappy Stories, True Confessions, and all the other McFadden string. This translation from the French deals adequately with the psychology of a great emotion. The approach is intellectual rather than sloppy. There is fine delineation and careful artistry coupled with a boldness and realism that sends a thrill through the reader. None of that smell of the dissecting room that emanates from so many of our "would be" sex novels. The confusion of the pathology of sex-emotion with the normal, healthy physiology of that visceral reaction (according to John B. Watson) is missing in Proust's work.

HENRY FLURY.

*A Great Man*, by Walter Vodges. Longman's, Green & Co. \$2.00.

Our jazzy young writers simply put some gin in the old fruit punch. Times have changed. Paul Whiteman takes the classics and jazzes them to date. Will Durant makes philosophy hot stuff. Literary muckers have struck pay dirt in biography and history. *A Great Man* is of this school. This novel is not literature, it's movie stuff. And I'll wager the movies get it.

W. C.

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## BIRTH CONTROL

*Motherhood in Bondage* by Margaret Sanger. Brentanos, \$3.00.

It is many years now since the Women's Cooperative Guild of England employed Margaret Bondfield to bring together the letters of working class wives about their difficulties in childbirth and the need for birth control. I remember that English volume of letters as one of the most moving documents I ever read. The incredible fortitude of those women whose husbands got two and three pounds a week... and that with no security. They set their experiences down and became, through their letters, one of the most forceful lobbies that ever raised a voice in the House of Commons. But they wanted so little. A little money when the babies came... the right to get information about their own bodies from the government doctors.

And now Margaret Sanger has brought together a similar collection of letters. Actually, in the presentation of the book, I miss certain things... the other letters were, I seem to remember, in answer to a questionnaire, and presented more illumination about the lives of the writers, and were concerned as much about caring for babies who were wanted and could come, as about birth control. They were letters from an organized body of women. They were letters from a body of women cooperatively organized, whose leaders worked more than for anything else to lessen the gap between the "chair" and "the floor". They were wholly a working class and class conscious organization. (I remember one of their crises, when Lady Astor invited herself to address one of their meetings, piqued that a body of voters should escape being diddled by the Astor charm. But they would have none of milady.) I was moved, thrilled and made happy by the English collection of letters. I felt that workers and women had found a tongue and a form of protest, and slow but sure would push their own way into possession of their own rights.

With an entirely different feeling, I read Margaret Sanger's book. I read it with anger, at so many piteous and miserable women asking for help as they drown. In these letters there is no rich implied sense of the working class, and no setting has been written in by the priestess to whom these Miserable turned. I am angry at America, at women, at myself.

Life is so miserably short for individuals. What hateful, dreadful frightened, sick lives so many live, unpossessed of knowledge, with no choice of misfortunes.

I look at the book again, less angry, except with myself; here are indeed the records... not to be gainsaid. What nation of men can call themselves free when their women suffer so... when they themselves must suffer with their women.

E. E.

## SPEECHES OF GENE DEBS

*Eugene V. Debs*,—International Publishers. New York. \$0.50.

*Eugene V. Debs*, which is published as volume IX of the Voices of Revolt series, contains a short, competent summary by Alexander Trachtenberg, the editor, of Debs' attitude on a number of crucial issues facing him as a working class leader. On the trade union question, on his estimation of the Soviets, on his opposition to the imperialist War and, lastly, in his relations to the socialist party officialdom. Trachtenberg shows Debs as instinctively the revolutionist, however much he may have lacked clarification on certain specific issues,—for example the Dictatorship of the Proletariat. This estimation of Debs is thoroughly confirmed by the excerpts from his speeches which make up more than half the book.

C. W. C.

*Chicago May* published by the Macaulay Co. reviewed in our February issue, was incorrectly listed at \$2.50. The price of this interesting insight into crime as a business is \$3.00.

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## SCENTED WITH COWSLIPS

*Joseph And His Brethren*, by H. W. Freeman. Henry Holt & Co. \$2.50.

Too much may be said of this book. It smacks of the land but does not reek of it as it should do. It talks of pigs, but does not smell of pigs.

To one who has known the drudgery of farming the account is far too airy. The preface states that the story is simply told, that it portrays life as it is torn from the soil. The words are there all right, in abundance, but there is no soil clinging to the letters.

Throughout the book there is a decided lack of that earthy feeling that one would expect from such a work. Simple it is—too simple, without weight. As entertainment for giggling girls and overwrought young men, it is admirable. The love affairs are amply scented with cowslips, and flavored with chocolates, but there is nothing to make one suspect that the love is of the brand common to virile young savages who have sucked their nourishment out of the earth. There is too much of the schoolboy, and these young men were reared in the land's bondage.

The purpose of the work, one assumes, is to show the attachment of farm-bred people to the soil. Benjamin Geaiter, a laborer, marries a bar-maid, gains possession of an ill-famed patch of ground, and rears five sons according to the ways of a farm. Three sons, brought up in drudgery, take it upon themselves to rebel at one time or another, but always they fly back to the home nest. It is a good story, no doubt, but is it life?

If one does not read the preface, and knows nothing of the land, the book affords good reading. Technically it is all there, and it will, undoubtedly, compare favorably with a few sales records. There is nothing to say against it as fiction—it lines up well, but the fact remains: It talks of the soil and does not smell of it. To me that is fault enough.

WALTER BARBER.

## A POWERFUL STORY

*The Case of Sergeant Grischa*, by Arnold Zweig. The Viking Press. \$2.50.

Arnold Zweig has written a fine, realistic story of the war, using as factual material the true story of a Russian prisoner-of-war who escapes, is recaptured, taken for a spy, and executed—though everyone knows he is innocent. This is not a great novel simply because there is too much delicate Schnitzlerian insistence upon the individual psychology, while too little use is made of the flash-light of social intelligence. However, the cumulative effect of the book is one of powerful, stark tragedy. Zweig exhibits a great deal of brilliance in satirical chapters like that entitled: "Portrait of an Autocrat"; and certain incidental characters are successfully and vividly portrayed, though not always to the advantage of the novel as a whole. For example, the mildly liberal general "of the old school," Von Lychow, only serves to sentimentalize and distort the significance of capitalist warfare. Persons like Babka, the faithful sweetheart of Grischa, and Tawje, a philosophical and fervent old Jewish carpenter, are true to life and add to the scope of the novel. But much of the day-by-day detail is irrelevant and tends to drag the action of the story. Too often we encounter the old familiar reiteration of mellow introspection, but despite these lapses, "Grischa" is full of meat; its theme and background alone recommend it; and it can honestly be described as "a darned good book."

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## MODERN SLAVERY

*Black America*, by Scott Nearing. Vanguard Press. \$3.00.

At last we have a book on the American Negro by a white American, which states the "Negro Problem" without fear or favor. The preparation of Scott Nearing's mind in studying and discussing all phases of social problems fitted him for attacking and understanding this "peculiar" problem,—which, by the way, he adequately proves is not "peculiar" at all, but is the same old economic problem of labor and profits, poverty and wealth,—a class problem with the handicap of "race and color" added to it.

In terse but explicit language of short and readable chapters Mr. Nearing discusses almost every phase of the situation of the Negro in America—from slave laborer to "free" peon,—from the "Black Belt" to the sparsely settled West,—from segregation to lynching.

So far as my observation goes, Scott Nearing is the first disinterested white writer who has dared to tell the truth about these things without extenuation and "white-washing," and the Vanguard Press is about the only prominent white publisher in the United States who would issue the book. I do not remember ever before seeing in a book done by a white American such an unexpurgated array of inter-racial facts, nor so many striking illustrations made from actual photographs of lynchings, burnings, and of the economic handicapping and oppressing of Negro Americans. This economic discrimination is the fundamental discrimination: no other form of discrimination could long continue if there were economic equality. The color-psychosis of America lends itself admirably to economic robbery against a large working-class group. Mr. Nearing's book shows clearly that "outcast socially" is always the companion and consequence of being "subjugated and exploited economically."

The book is not only "social science;" it is literature: it is so well written that one can glide through its 270 pages of facts, figures and pictures without the least weariness. Whether the author chose to insinuate it or not, it is clear from the conditions described and the cases cited that white and black of the economic under class in America can save themselves only by refusing to be used as clubs, one against the other's head, and by class co-operation: by obliterating the "color line" so far as their economic, civil and political interests are concerned. The workers must put the interests of workers before every other interest. "Color lines" among workers are too useful to the exploiters of labor.

But I never did like "book reviews:" they always seem to me like somebody trying to *describe* to you the taste of a new variety of food instead of simply inviting you to *taste the food*. The best and the pleasantest way on earth to get the message and import of "Black America" is to take the two or three hours and *read the book*.

WILLIAM PICKENS.

## The Negro Comes to Town

*Negro Problems in Cities*, by T. J. Woofter, Jr. Doubleday, Doran, Inc. \$2.50.

*Negro Problems in Cities* is a two hundred and eighty one page book, the result of a survey made by the Institute of Social and Religious Research. It is not surprising therefore to find the fundamental factors which determine the manner and treatment under which Negroes in cities are forced to live completely ignored. These are, of course, the industrial and economic factors.

Mr. Woofter, under whose direction this study was made, has chosen "to limit the inquiry to aspects of city Negro neighborhoods that relate to housing, to recreation, and to schools," believing that "these are among the most interesting and significant factors in Negro adaptation to city life." Certainly these are the most harmless factors with which social workers have to deal. Treated as subjects unrelated to the great struggle of the working masses of all races to free themselves from capitalistic subjection, the "Negro Problem in Cities," as projected by Mr. Woofter and his collaborators, will furnish endless material for discussion by Inter-racial

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The first part of the study, "Neighborhoods," gives valuable data, on the influx of southern Negroes to cities, both North and South. From 1900 to 1920 Negro city population increased more than a million and a half, while the Negro population of rural districts increased by only seventy-two thousand. The gain in northern cities was 105% as against 65% in the south. The bulk of this increase is concentrated in a few industrial centers. No provision has been made for accomodating this mass of rural laborers, unadapted to city life and economically insecure. Living quarters and a job are imperative. Where can they be found? Mr. Woofter ignores the job, but admits, that because the Negro is the lowest paid of any workers, he must submit to anything he can get in the way of a place to live. The landlord has him at his mercy. When the Negro moves in race prejudice flares up. He, therefore, inherits those neighborhoods which lie at the bottom of the living scale; dilapidated leaky, filthy, shacks, often unconnected with sewage systems, streets unpaved, poorly lighted, trailing streams of accumulated garbage and other refuse. For these quarters he pays rent out of all proportion to what the rooms are worth. In Chicago, for instance, Negroes pay \$25.00 a month for a flat which rents to white families for \$20.00. In Buffalo Negroes pay \$25.00 for the same tenement rooms for which white tenants pay \$7.00. High rents on low incomes mean lodgers, overcrowding, high sickness and death rates, the forcing of mothers and children into industry.

Other chapters on segregation, schools, recreational facilities tell the same story. The Negro, in spite of the Emancipation Proclamation, remains a subject race, forced to live in segregated neighborhoods, overcrowded and unsanitary, with recreational and school facilities restricted to the "least the traffic will bear." With faith in the political and economic *status quo*, Mr. Woofter and his collaborators trust to our municipalities to solve the Negro problem in cities "on some basis that will allow Negroes to develop a desirable home life and wholesome neighborhood surroundings." Moreover, it seems that Mr. Woofter is, after all, more interested in the "better class" Negro. "The lesson for the cities is plain. Each city needs neighborhoods supplied with municipal improvements into which the *better class* Negroes can move without opposition."

For the mass of Negro workers, Mr. Woofter seems to see little hope, outside of the philanthropist seeking safe investments: "The fact disclosed by the experience of philanthropists that the providing of good homes for Negroes is a *profitable business undertaking* in cities, may lead to building operations on a scale sufficient to aid materially in relieving the present bad conditions in many places, *when that fact comes generally to the attention of investors.*" (italics mine. Reviewer)

When the fact comes generally to the attention of workers, both black and white, that they can expect nothing from employers, either as employers, as philanthropists, or as government officials, the Negro problem in cities, will become a question of workers organizing to solve their own problems. Only then will a solution be possible.

GRACE BURNHAM.

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*War as an Instrument of National Policy, and its Renunciation in the Pact of Paris, by Prof. James T. Shotwell. Harcourt, Brace & Co. \$3.50.*

It is seldom that the publication of a volume so nearly coincides with a vote of the United States Senate upon the subject. The writer talked with over a dozen Senators while the Peace Pact was being discussed by that august body—all of whom planned, and I think did vote for it, *but no one of whom took it seriously*, and several of whom boasted that they were going to vote for the cruiser bill, and regretted that more cruisers and airplane carriers were not included in the cruiser bill.

While wicked "war" is formally banished, Prof. Shotwell says: "We are not eliminating power from the affairs of nations when we renounce war, as liberals of the tentative mind have feared. We are only bringing into play more pertinent powers than those of the old barbaric and destructive sort, powers that are inherent in the constructive rather than the destructive energy of civilization."

"Self-defense wars" include any that Great Britain may wage to have and to hold Egypt, India and the rest of her colonies, dependencies and possessions, any that France may wage over Alsace and Lorraine, probably Morocco and Abyssinia, if not parts of Asia Minor; and any that the American Empire may wage in the Western Hemisphere, if I correctly envisage the broad fields of exceptions to the farewell to Mars which Prof. Shotwell so feelingly depicts.

Is it a coincidence that the Carnegie Foundation for International Peace, with which Prof. Shotwell is associated, has repeatedly declined to have anything to do with getting the facts about concessions Americans have obtained abroad, and allocation of raw materials? Andy must be enjoying his post-mortem observations on the effectiveness of his "Peace" endowment.

BENJAMIN C. MARSH.



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# WORKERS' LETTERS

## A STONE CUTTER AND ART YOUNG

Why doesn't someone write about stone-work for this man's magazine? All along down the ages the toilers and stone have been pretty good pals ever since the stoop-shouldered thing found out that a pebble was something more than a part of the scenery. Or just consider the castles and all that, which were not put up by anointed paws. Or imagine a commune feverishly working on their solid defensive walls, only to have to give in to some bloody anarchists who wanted slaves.

But seeing that you want the real thing as it is let me introduce you to a man whose rump sticks out so far it isn't perfectly human any longer. Until I became used to the work my hands stung to beat hell, not to say anything about the back and all that, so it was only natural for me to ask him how he'd like to be as young as myself again. "Oh hell no, thirty years in a stone-quarry is plenty."

One man told me he used to work so hard he could hardly walk home at night. Another fellow told me he couldn't touch his supper (when he was 20 to 25 years old of course). All that speaks for itself but it might be worse: a large middle-aged lady told me it took her a year to get used to milking some 15 cows twice a day. And we live but once.

A fellow could go on like this but I'm saving some for an article something like Art Young's "On My Way". Besides we shouldn't worry too much about a country where a writer will tell working men that "Our life is too easy!"

I dream of the dawn when workers will put up wonderful houses made of stone and everybody cutting at least quite a bit of it—for ourselves—and with no parasites in sight. Man, but it satisfies when a person does good work.

B. DEANOVICH

Lannon, Wis.

## FROM A CANADIAN LOGGER

Here in the logging industry it's one mad rush for more logs, speed up. The men are unorganized tho the majority are class conscious. We have not even the elementary right of collective bargaining. The Loggers Association (employers) thru their employment office keep close tabs on all employees. A man has absolutely no say in his living and working conditions. Unless a man is a good dog, snappy, and keeps his ideas to himself he will be blackballed.

A revolutionary change is the only way. I find the contemptible, despicable life of a working man well-nigh intolerable. I get a grim relish out of the thought that today is the bosses, but the future is ours. Yours for "The Day"

E. G. BIRCH

Hollyburn, B. C., Canada.

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## FOR COLLEGE STUDENT H. H. C.

A number of letters have been received for H. H. C. of San Joaquin, Calif, whose letter appeared in our January issue. These will be forwarded on receipt of name and address.

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